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THE Liguorian

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LOVERS OF GOOD READING

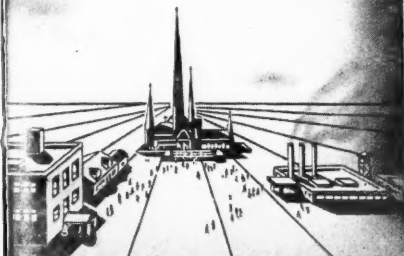


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NOVEMBER, 1952

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Amongst Ourselves

Right attitudes toward death are given a great amount of space in this issue of **THE LIGURIAN**. Perhaps there is no single topic on which a person's convictions provide a clearer key to the depth of his Christian faith than that of death. To be a Christian you have to know how to grieve over the death of a beloved one without despair and with profit; you have to possess a realistic awareness of the fascinating truths that have been revealed about the various states of being beyond the grave; you have to permit the thought of death and what follows it to influence the actions of your daily life. November is a wonderful time for probing into oneself for evidences of the right attitudes toward death, because it is the month in which nature, tradition, custom and liturgy all combine to turn the thoughts of Christians toward death and their dead. As you read **THE LIGURIAN** this month, check whether the thoughts it presents on this subject have become part of the fabric of your mind.

The Christmas issue of **THE LIGURIAN** is in preparation, and is being designed to make Advent a joyous season of anticipating Christmas, and to provide a practical and effective means whereby old readers of **THE LIGURIAN** will be able to wish a merry Christmas to new. Few persons would ever have the time or the ability to write 64 pages of Christmas greetings to a friend. **THE LIGURIAN** will provide those 64 pages for all who want to do more than

use a hackneyed phrase or a material gift to convey their wishes to friends. More than that, the Christmas issue will be followed up by eleven more issues of **THE LIGURIAN**, in which the pattern of life and peace brought into the world by Christ at Christmas will be more and more unfolded.

To use **THE LIGURIAN** as your own means of greeting others, and as a source of continued growth in the spirit of Christ for them, give them a year's subscription as a present, beginning with the December number. Do it early because it is so necessary for us to know in advance how many copies of the December issue should be printed. And know that there will be a blessed by-product of your Christmas giving in the fact that your gifts to others will help us, your editors, to complete the building of our safe, new **LIGURIAN** office with less indebtedness than we now anticipate. If one-half of our present readers would be inspired to give one **LIGURIAN** subscription as a present to someone else, our only indebtedness would be that of having to pay for the printing of all next year's magazines. That benefit, we insist, would be only a by-product of the good done to others by spreading **THE LIGURIAN**, and of itself shall never be made the object of an appeal. Do send in your gift subscriptions early. Use or copy the form on the back cover of this issue for that purpose.

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THE Liguorian

November, 1952

a magazine for the lovers of good reading



Devoted to the Unchangeable Principles of Truth, Justice, Democracy and Religion, and to All That Brings Happiness to Human Beings

How to Grieve for Your Dead

The most difficult and, in a way, most important hours in anyone's life are those that follow on the death of one who is dearly loved. They should not be wasted by unprofitable grief.

D. F. Miller

IF YOU love someone greatly, and that person is taken from you by death, there is nothing on earth that can prevent you from grieving. The whole world will recognize the naturalness of your tears. Friends will extend their sympathy with a feeling that there is little they can say or do that will dull the sharp edge of your grief. You will experience the great loneliness that only death can bequeath to those whose loved ones it has taken away.

While it is impossible not to grieve over the loss of one who was greatly cherished, it is possible to learn how to grieve with profit both to yourself and to the one whom death took away from you. There is nothing in human experience that cannot be faced and endured in a right way and a wrong way. The experience of bereavement is no exception to this rule. Only it must be noted that the right way to endure grief over the death of a loved one cannot be learned on the spur of the moment, nor in the sudden hour of its need. It must be mulled over beforehand. The right thoughts that must survive in one's consciousness through the emotional upheaval that goes with bereavement must have been

pondered and made familiar long before the need arose.

That is why the thoughts here presented should be considered carefully by all, even those who have never yet seen death fixed on the features of someone very close to them. We can think of only one kind of person who has no need for these thoughts. It is the supremely selfish man and woman who have never forgotten self long enough to love somebody else with a deep and wholehearted love. Such persons do not grieve very much when one close to them is taken by death. There is no need of trying to teach them how to grieve with profit. They need something far more essential; they need to be taught how to forget themselves in true and sincere love of someone else.

Two very special points should be noted here, preliminary to a consideration of the principles that make grief in bereavement profitable. The first is the fact that we are considering only such loves between human beings as are honest and good in the eyes of God. A person who has been living in forbidden and sinful love and companionship with another, and who then suddenly finds the latter taken by

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death, has reasons for grief far beyond anything that shall be dealt with here. To have contributed to the bad death of a human being, as by living with that person in a sinful alliance or a bad marriage to the very end, is a cause of grief for which there are practically no palliating words that can be said.

The other point is that grief can be turned into profit only where there has been and is genuine faith in God, acceptance of the merits of Christ, convictions of the immortality of the soul, and dedication to the destiny for which God created all human beings. We confess to a sense of utmost futility in speaking to bereaved persons who, together with their deceased loved ones, have had no real faith in God or the reality of another world. At the same time it can be said that a statement of the principles that make the grief of bereavement bearable and profitable for Christians can awaken in pagans a realization of how unnatural and empty are their lives and griefs so long as they turn their eyes away from God and the world that exists beyond the grave. It is hoped that these words will perform that service for many who need it.

1.

The first principle that must be tenaciously clung to in the dark hours and empty days that follow on the death of someone greatly loved, may be phrased as follows:

All human grief arises from a mingling of selfish and unselfish motives. The selfish motives must be mortified; the unselfish motives can be turned into spiritual joy.

Grief arises, first of all, over the loss of something precious. This is a spontaneous thing, and is not to be entirely condemned merely because of the selfish element it contains. No normal

human being can help grieving over the loss of a good mother, a loyal father, a faithful husband or wife, a beloved child, a close and dear friend. The loss of something good and dear naturally brings about the reaction of grief in human emotions. Though this cannot be prevented, it helps greatly to be conscious, in the midst of grief, that the selfish motive is present, and to try to temper it as much as possible.

We all like to think, however, that it is not only our loss that causes our grief in bereavement. We are so constituted that we do grieve spontaneously out of sympathy for the sufferings of others. That is why people shed tears at a tragic stage show, or if they happen to be present when somebody else is keenly suffering, even though they themselves are but little involved. So, too, when death takes from us someone whom we have greatly loved, our grief will be partly a grief of sympathy. Death, we say, was a misfortune that befell our beloved. Death silenced the voice and froze the hands and stilled the heart of one whom we cherished. We grieve, therefore, not only over what we lost, but also over the terrible thing that happened to the one we lost.

It is here that the realities of faith must take over to temper both the selfish and unselfish elements of our grief. We think of death as a misfortune for two reasons; first, because of what it does to the body, and second, because it is so strong an instinct of our nature to cling to life on earth as a most precious possession. Both these reasons must yield to convictions born of the revealed teachings of the Son of God Himself.

Death does treat the body cruelly, but it brings about a great release, a happy liberation, for the soul. The very coldness and stillness of a body in

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death should be a reminder of the new freedom and exaltation of the soul. If the eyes could still see and the hands still move and the heart still beat, the soul would still be there. That the body can no longer act must be a reminder even to those whose eyes are blinded by tears that the soul is elsewhere, and that it now has a knowledge and love to which all that it had while united to the body cannot even dimly be compared.

It is true, too, that all human instincts resist death and cling to life, so that one who dies may be said to have failed in his battle to hold body and soul together. But even though one whom we loved did try to cling to life to the instant when death occurred, it must never be forgotten that immediately after death every good Christian finds himself infinitely better off than he was in this world. He knows then that his battles are over; his loves are purified and exalted; his sufferings, if any remain to be endured in purgatory, are but a pledge of most certain and unlimited happiness. With far deeper meaning than is sometimes put into the words by those bereaved, it can be said of those who have died in the Lord that "they would not want to come back again." This must be said even of a child whose soul death has taken from this world.

Thus pity and sympathy for the good dead turn out, in the light of faith, to be unrealistic and misplaced. What is left is the sense of the loss to ourselves. We cannot smother this nor even hide it. It irresistibly charges our feelings and emotions with pain. But in the depths of the soul, where convictions born of faith remain strong, there is comfort and hope and peace.

2.

There is a second principle which, when remembered and made conscious

in the midst of the grief of bereavement, helps to bring solace and peace. It may be worded as follows:

Human grief in bereavement is intensified by the remembrance of hurts that were inflicted on the one who cannot suffer such hurts any more. This feature of one's grief should be turned into deeds of mercy for the dead that will far outweigh the hurts that were given in life.

All human loves on earth are imperfect. Two people who love each other dearly, even husband and wife, mother and son, brother and sister, friend and friend, inevitably find over the course of the years that they sometimes hurt each other. It may be by thoughtlessness or neglect; or through misunderstanding or difference of opinion; or as a result of sensitiveness or impatience. The hurts inflicted may range from the momentary ones resulting from a sudden harsh word or gesture, to the long enduring heartaches that survive bitter quarrels or downright sins. Love is rarely experienced for very long on earth without some heartache and pain.

This is a proof to the thoughtful that human beings were made for the perfect loves of heaven, and that they shall never know an all-satisfying love until they have won that goal. It is also a reminder to those who have been bereaved that they are now to make up for the slights and hurts that they inflicted on the one who has now been taken from them. They cannot slight or hurt, as they did before, their beloved dead any more. But the memory of the past shortcomings of their own love can be turned into wonderful deeds of charity and mercy in behalf of their dead.

Indeed, this seems to be one of the reasons why God does not reveal to the living when or how soon the souls

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of their dead will be admitted into heaven. He wants true love and deeds of mercy to continue for a long time after death — even till a reunion is enjoyed in heaven. He wants love's wounds to be healed in death. He wants the memory of the imperfections of one's love to send forth into eternity a continuing flow of prayers and meritorious offerings that will speed the beloved's passage through purgatory and add to his happiness in heaven as the imperfections of earthly love continue to be atoned.

Without this principle there is too often an element of hypocrisy in a show of grief at the death of one who was close and dear. A son who often hurt his mother deeply during her life may act at her death as if his was always a perfect and unselfish love. A daughter who was given to quarrelling often with her mother while the latter was alive may manifest uncontrollable grief at her mother's death. A great variety of motives and feelings enter into such displays. We tend to idealize the dead and to grieve for the ideal we lost. Consciousness of our own faults toward the dead make remorse a part of our grief. Even human respect, in the form of a desire to grieve as the world expects of those who have lost a loved one, plays its part. But all the mixed emotions that come together in grief over the corpse of one who was close and dear, bear wonderful fruit if they are directed toward the deeds of mercy for the dead that both atone for the faults of the still living and pay the penalty still due for the faults of the dead.

3.

The third principle that takes some of the sharp sting out of bereavement may take the following form:

Death is always a valuable reminder to the living, and especially to those

who have loved the one whom death has taken, of the shortness and uncertainty of life on earth, of the importance of living in such a manner that death need not be feared, and of the joyous reunion that will take place between those who have been separated by death for a little while.

Nothing is permitted by God to happen to one human being that is not intended as a lesson to others. This is so because of the identity of the destiny that all men are created to achieve, and of many of the means to its attainment. All men are made to win heaven through the manner of their living on earth; the end of one person's living on earth should remind others who witness it, of their own principle goal. All men must die, even though many like to live in forgetfulness of the fact; the death of one breaks through that forgetfulness and drives home the salutary truth that death cannot be evaded. All men are to win heaven only by loyalty to God and true faith in Christ on earth; the death of one who was loyal and faithful is a reminder to the living of the only source of hope on which they can rely.

The closer one has been to a person who dies, the greater should be the force of these lessons. All deaths are lessons to the living, but the deaths of loved ones are like direct and inescapable reminders from God of the most important things. That is because the death of a loved one punctures the dangerous dream to which all are tempted to succumb, that life on earth may be sweet enough to cling to without thought of heaven. The longer God permits true love to be enjoyed on earth, the more He risks permitting His children to be deceived. Inevitably He lets death speak for Him sooner or later, to tell them that they must not turn astray from their true goal.

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This is one of God's purposes in permitting death to strike into the midst of happy families, or to sever friend from friend. It is evident in the fact that death often brings about wonderful conversions in the living that nothing else seemed capable of effecting. The wayward children of good mothers are sometimes brought to their senses and inspired to give up their sins only when they see that mother's features fixed and peaceful in death. Men and women who had thought they needed nothing but the little circle of human beings their love had created sometimes find themselves suddenly realizing their need of God when He has reached down and taken one most beloved out of that circle.

This requires humility, of course. Proud men and women become only embittered when they have to face the death of a dear one. Humble people recognize God's supreme rights and His infinite wisdom in death, even though they had been thinking little about them before. And they permit their thoughts to go out of this world with the one whom God took to Himself, until those thoughts rest with the loved one in God.

Added to the force of this lesson are the thoughts that inescapably come to those who are left to grieve over the death of one whom they loved. The first consists in the right answer to the question, "Do the dead still know and think about and love us to whom they were bound by love on earth?" The right answer to this question is yes, they do. God does not inspire the close relationships that true and virtuous love creates between human beings on earth only to smash and destroy them at death. Love is God's creation; He gave it the instinct and longing for permanence; it can be taken for granted that even in the bleak and silent sepa-

ration that death effects, He permits the dead to think of the living as the living cannot help thinking of the dead. Who will not be a better man or woman if the solid conviction is possessed that those whom they have loved and lost are not really lost, but are thinking of them in the presence of God in another world?

The second thought that makes the lessons of death more profitable is that which arises from the right answer to the question, "Shall I ever see this loved one again?" The answer again is yes, provided you live in such a way as to deserve a union with God and a reunion with your lost loved ones when your life is over. Death plays a wonderful part in God's plans for the salvation of all men when it inspires the bereaved living to say with all possible resoluteness of soul: "I shall now make straight for heaven where my loved one waits; I shall never be turned aside from that goal any more." The waiting period will seem short and swiftly passing for one who has thus fixed his eyes on its glorious end.

4.

There are two harmful attitudes toward the death of a beloved person that must be considered in conjunction with the right principles set down above.

The first is the attitude of self-recrimination that some bereaved persons fall into, on the score that they did not do enough, or failed to do some simple thing, that might have prevented the death over which they grieve. Too often people torture themselves with thoughts like these concerning their dead: "If only I had recognized the symptoms of his disease when they first appeared, he would be alive today." Or, "If only I had called a doctor a month earlier, his life would have been saved." Or, "It was my fault

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that he died because I did not insist that he give up working." This self-accusation takes its most acute form when death was due to an accident, whether the grieving person played an unconscious part in the accident or not. Over and over, in agonizing detail, such a person will think of how small a thing, what little watchfulness and care, would have prevented the tragedy that occurred.

This wrong attitude, to which all bereaved persons are tempted to succumb, except sometimes in the case of the death of the very old, can be exorcised only by reflexion on and faith in the providence of God. As responsible human beings, we are bound to do, indeed we can do, only the things that our conscience tells us are practically prudent and morally necessary here and now. If we neglected something, without any consciousness of neglect, that seems, after the event, to have had some bearing on a loved one's death, we are bound to see the wise and loving hand of God's providence in the event that occurred. Even when there was some conscious neglect but without realization of how serious the consequences might be, it must, after the fact, be accepted as part of God's plan that the death of one we loved should take place at this time and in this particular way. If, as Our Lord said, He has numbered the hairs of our head, He has also watched over the circumstances that led to anyone's death.

The second wrong attitude that sometimes leads not only to prolonged grieving but also to a habit of sin is that which arises from the thought that it was the neglect or mistake of someone else that occasioned the death of a loved one. The doctor did not come

at once when he was called; or he made a wrong diagnosis; or he prescribed a medicine that, instead of helping the patient, seemed to hasten death. Bereaved persons sometimes permit their grief to turn into a hatred of such a physician. We know of cases in which such persons have refused for years to speak to the doctor who was called for their mother or father or husband or wife because the patient died, and who have done all they could to harm the professional reputation of that doctor.

No one would say that the neglect or mistaken diagnosis of a physician never enters into the chain of circumstances that lead to death. But only one who is very proud in his own judgment, and forgetful of Christian principles, would set it down as certain that in a particular case this was actually the sole cause of death. And even where there are some grounds for believing that someone's neglect or carelessness may have contributed to the death of a loved one, it must be remembered that even such things could not happen except they were wisely permitted by the providence of God. There are no accidents with God; He permits nothing to happen that is not taken into His universal plans.

For this reason it is tragic for bereaved persons to permit the death of one whom they love to lead to hatred and detraction. If someone else sinned by neglect, it does no good to an individual who suffers from the result of that neglect to pile other sins on top of that sin. This only makes grief bitter and unprofitable and vain, when it might have borne great fruit both for the one who died and the one who was bereaved.

Eager To Help

The old Negro deacon wound up his long prayer by adding:

"Use me, O Lord, use me in Thy work—'specially in an advisory capacity."

What Purgatory is Like

Theology and practical common sense are combined here to give you a good idea of what purgatory will be like and what you should do about it.

E. F. Miller

FOR NOVEMBER we wish to tell you something about purgatory. The chances are that many of us in the not too distant future will be making a visit to that mysterious land. All tourist agencies say that when you go to a place where you have never been before it is good to bone up on the weather conditions, the companionship available, and the accommodations. This is good advice for anybody who is thinking of going to purgatory.

There are two classes of people who make this little sidetrip before setting off for heaven.

There are those who die in unrepented venial sin. If you tell little lies, fall into fits of anger, use God's name in vain, talk uncharitably about your neighbor, disobey your parents, or eat too much, you commit a venial sin. You have to be sorry for what you have done, or you'll be assigned a place in purgatory when you die. Venial sins are just about the easiest thing in the world to commit. If one doesn't watch oneself, one can have a whole string of venial sins before a full day has passed. And of course, the greater the number of venial sins, the worse is the weather and the meaner are the accommodations in purgatory.

Then there are those who die without having done sufficient penance for their sins after their sins were forgiven.

It is a law of the universe that whenever the system or the order that is inherent in all created things is broken some kind of reparation must be made. In the physical world this law surely

holds. A man is hurt in an automobile accident and the whole order of his body has been disturbed. The only way he can get that order back is to go to a hospital and have a couple of operations or lie in bed for a few months and take medicine that tastes like poison. That is the reparation necessary to restore the broken order of his body.

The same thing holds for the moral order. When this order or system is broken by a sin, it can be fixed up only when the sinner does penance. God says that that is the way a man makes up for the evil that he has done. Penance, then, is a very important thing.

Now, there are lots of people who don't want to have anything to do with penance. It is their purpose in life to avoid pain, not to seek it. They would laugh at you if you suggested to them that they shouldn't smoke or drink or ride in an automobile. And they would think you were crazy if you said to them that they'd be wise if they hung on a hook for an hour or two a day or slept on the floor every third night of the week or mixed ashes with their ice cream when the dessert was handed out at dinner. If you insisted that you gave this advice only because it is necessary for every man who has committed a sin to do penance, they would accuse you of being scrupulous, or of being a fanatic or "a nut." And they would go their merry way, having as good a time in life as they could, without ever thinking that if they didn't do their penance here on earth, they

would most assuredly do it someplace else.

They would and they will do it in purgatory. Very likely most of the people in purgatory are not the venial sinners but rather the good time Joes who never did a hard thing in their life unless they were forced to it at the point of a gun.

And that constitutes the population and companionship of purgatory. They'll be fine people — all of them, for they shall have been given the assurance that their souls are saved. In a sense they'll be saints. But there won't be any running off to a movie during Lent or throwing down a Tom Collins with ice cubes tinkling in the glass when the temperature goes up. Neither will there be soft cushions on the metaphorical kneelers and soft music in the background to take the mind off trouble. Just a good crowd of people, sweating it out together until the heat is turned off and the windows are opened.

There is no sure evidence from the Bible or the teachings of the Church that there is fire in purgatory. The Popes have never said anything about it. In fact, the Eastern rites of the Catholic Church have always held that there was no fire in purgatory; and they were never reprimanded by the Holy See for their teaching. If it were certain, or rather, if it were a revealed doctrine that fire burns in purgatory, you can be sure that anyone who held the opposite would have been asked to accept this part of God's revelation or else be denounced as a heretic.

However, it has always been a popular belief amongst western Catholics that it is hot in purgatory. There have been visions granted to holy people, showing the suffering souls swathed in fire and crying out in the terrible thirst that was upon them. But these visions

were private visions, and do not demand belief from Catholics as a part of revealed religion. Still, the fact that the Church has never made a pronouncement about the matter is no absolute proof that there is no fire. Maybe there is. You would be foolish if you said that you were no longer afraid of purgatory because the fire has been put out or because there never was a fire.

There will be other things twenty times as painful as fire.

The worst of them all will be the loneliness you will feel. There are very few people in the world who have not felt the pangs of loneliness. The mother seeing her son march off to war. The wife kissing her husband good-bye as he travels to a foreign country in the service of his flag. The mother and father looking down upon the face of their child who has been taken away from them by death. There are no words in any language that can adequately describe the anguish of a heart so afflicted. And then the long days and months that follow. That is when loneliness is like a knife cutting away the very substance of the heart.

But this loneliness is nothing in comparison to what you will feel if you go to purgatory. You shall have learned in some measure what God is like. You shall have found out that He is the very end and purpose of your being, the cause of your creation. You will be to God as a needle is to a magnet — pulled towards Him with a force that makes it almost impossible for you to stay away. And yet you will have to stay away. You won't be able to move. A longing will rise in your soul that will be worse than being burned alive at the stake.

Furthermore you will realize that in God are all the beauties that you enjoyed on earth, only multiplied a mil-

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lionfold — the mountains, the seas, the flowers, the star-lit heavens, the masterpieces of the artists. You will understand that these earthly beauties are only shadows in comparison with the beauty that is His. In spite of this you won't be able to see God face to face. You will desire with a fierce desire to explore the beauty of that face. But all to no avail. You won't catch a glimpse of Him until you have finished your term in purgatory. It is going to be awful. And we warn you about it now so that you can plan a detour when you launch forth on your final journey.

Over and above that, in purgatory you will find out for the first time the real meaning of love. The love that you had for those near and dear to you on earth had drawbacks. You were afraid that you would lose that love. Or you felt that you would never be able to love the loved one as much as you wanted to. Your earthly love seemed to be circumscribed by limits and pricked by hidden thorns.

Well, in purgatory your love for God will be greater than all the human love in the world combined — greater than the love of the young husband for his wife or of parents for their children or of a friend for a friend. You will simply live for God. Your every thought will be bound up in Him. But you won't be able to possess Him. Love demands possession. And the greater the love, the more agonizing the pain if possession is not granted. Imagine what it will be like, then, if you go to purgatory and discover that it is out of the question for you to reach out and, as it were, take God into your arms in spite of the fact that you love Him so much that if you had had that kind of love on earth, you would have simply died from it. You wouldn't have been able to stand it.

Thus, it does not seem likely that you are going to miss the fire very much if it turns out that there is no fire after all. You'll have other things at hand to give you a bad time.

The one thing that is absolutely sure about purgatory is the fact that you will not lose your personality while you are there. It does look pretty much like the end of everything when a man is lying in his coffin. There isn't much life in him. And then he is put into the ground and covered up. If we didn't know any better, we might be just like so many of our fellow Americans who haven't heard the good news, and who believe that with death all is over. Poor John is gone. He is as though he had never existed.

That is complete and unadulterated nonsense. When you go to purgatory you will recognize yourself as yourself and not as a ghost or a shadow or a balloon floating through the air which a child might puncture with his finger were he able to reach it. In a sense you will be able to pinch yourself and ask in surprised innocence how you got there. You will be very relieved that you saved your soul. But you will be so really alive that it will almost feel as though you had never died. And here you are now in purgatory.

And so you will say, "How did I get myself into this mess? This is not going to be pleasant at all." And then it will dawn on you what you did. Your wife bought a new hat. It was a silly hat according to your way of looking at things. And it cost a lot of money. You flew into a great fit of anger. You didn't cut off her head in order to spite her hat. You were tempted to do just that. But you controlled yourself. However, you did not control your anger. You let it fly. You beat your poor wife into a figurative pulp with the bludgeon blows of your

words. She simply melted into tears.

You were never quite sorry for the way you acted. And then you died. And now, here you are in purgatory, the same old John Smith, living and thinking and suffering just as you did in the old days before you hung up your body in the closet of your grave to await the last day when you'll get it back. It rather amazes you to look down on those you left behind and to see them mourning for you as though you had come to an end. If only they could see you, you sigh, they would realize that you are very much alive.

It is very probably true that you will know what's going on amongst your relatives and friends whom you left behind when you took off on the wings of that last breath you drew. If your mother and father like to go to Notre Dame football games, there is no evidence against the possibility of your knowing what is going on there. You won't get too much fun out of the game, it is true, because you'll still be suffering in purgatory. But you may know the score. And very likely you'd give a piece off the top of your soul if you could let the folks know that you were with them in spirit. But God won't let you for His own good reasons. So, you'll have to be quiet and keep yourself out of sight. So it will be with your wife whom you left a widow with a houseful of youngsters. You'll be looking down on her to see how things are going, and hoping against hope that she doesn't give up in the midst of her overpowering duties. The one thing you want is to see her again.

How long will purgatory last? For some people it may be a pretty long time. One story is told of a girl who went to purgatory and who, it was revealed to a friend of hers, will stay there until the end of the world. Maybe it isn't true. You don't have to be-

lieve it. But it is true that some will stay there longer than others. A legend has it that a minute in purgatory is the equivalent of a hundred years here on earth. The best advice is not to worry about the length of time, but to plan on not going there at all.

And that brings up a rather interesting point. Some people are inclined to believe that only the saints escape purgatory. That is a fallacy. One dollar will bring you ten (to be paid after we get our wings) that a great number of ordinary good people do not go to purgatory at all. They did their penance on earth in the cheerful acceptance of the cancers and consumptions and sorrows that God allowed to fall upon them. They gained a good number of indulgences before they died. And they were holding in their hand the crucifix which had been given the blessing for the happy death when they arrived at the end. They were not miracle-workers. But they did their best, and were willing to accept all that God sent. No doubt many of them flew like an arrow right up to heaven.

And if it so happened that some of your friends did go to purgatory for a time, you can help them as long as you are still on earth and they are in need of help. You can pray for them. You should do this every night before you go to bed. One part of your night prayers should be an Our Father and a Hail Mary for the deceased members of your family. You can have holy Mass said for them. You should do this as often as you can, but especially each year on the day of the anniversary of the death. The Mass, particularly if it is accompanied by Holy Communion, affords the most powerful relief to the suffering souls.

How can a man say that he truly loves his wife who has been taken away from him by death when he neg-

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lects to receive Holy Communion often for the repose of her soul? His love is a funny kind of love when it refuses her the one great thing that can help her.

And you can gain as many indulgences as the Church allows. An indulgence is an application of the merits of Christ and the Church to the one to whom the indulgence is directed. Only God knows how many poor souls are rescued by indulgences.

And that is all we shall tell you about purgatory this time. It is difficult to understand how so many people find it impossible to believe that there is a purgatory. Here is a mother with a little daughter eight years old. The mother tells, indeed commands the girl to come out and help wash the dishes.

The girl disobeys. Right afterwards she dies. No chance for sorrow. No chance to go to confession. She committed a sin. No soul with a sin on it can go to heaven. The Bible says that. What then is to happen to the girl? Surely she won't go to hell for her small infraction of the fourth commandment. Well, she has to go some place. The Church says it is purgatory, because Our Lord talked about atoning for such sins in the next world. And the mother feels close to her girl by the fact that she can help her reach heaven.

At any rate, let's stay out of purgatory ourselves. And let's use November for clearing out the prison of everybody who is there on the first of the month. It will be a month well spent.

The Name

Sensitiveness, the Holy Name Journal points out, has not characterized Christians in their use of the name of God. Perhaps it might have been otherwise had the very word given in the second commandment, Jahveh, come into general use. As it is, the word "God," and its equivalents in other languages, Deus, Dieu, Dio, Gott, etc., is of obscure origin and meaning. Probably, according to the Oxford Dictionary, it is from the Arian root, Gheu, meaning the one to Whom sacrifice is offered or Who is invoked. But no one thinks of that. "God" means the Supreme Being, and the word is used and just as freely abused.

"My God!", "Mon Dieu!", "Dio Mio!", "Mein Gott!" come lightly on the tongue, betraying a lack of recollection very far from what is required by the stern command: "Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain."

Prayer For Thanksgiving Day

Let me, Dear Lord,
Declare a holiday
From "Give me, give me. . ."
When I kneel and pray.

Today at least, my prayer
Should surely be:
"I'm grateful, grateful, Lord,
For all your gifts to me."

LGM



Three Minute Instruction

Christian Burial

Every sincere Catholic lives in the hope that at his death he will be granted Christian burial. This means that, if possible, his body will be brought to a parish church, a requiem Mass and *Libera* will be celebrated for his soul, and his body will then be laid in consecrated ground with the final rites of the Church at the grave. However, the laws of the Church rightly deny these great privileges to the following individuals:

1. Those who have become known as apostates from the Catholic faith, or who have joined heretical or schismatical religious sects, or who have become members of a Masonic Order or any other forbidden society. Only if such as these have given signs of repentance before death can they be buried from a Catholic church.

2. Those who have been excommunicated by the Church and have not repented or sought absolution before death.

3. Those who have deliberately taken their own lives. In these cases there is sometimes doubt as to whether the person was sane enough to make suicide a deliberate action. It is for the bishop to decide, then, whether there was evidence of insanity that would make the action indeliberate.

4. Those who were killed in a duel, or who died as a result of wounds inflicted in a duel.

5. Those who ordered that after death their bodies should be cremated.

6. Those who had been living open and public lives of sin up to the time of death. Under this head would come anyone living in an invalid marriage, or in open concubinage, or in open defiance and hatred of their pastor or bishop, etc. Of course whenever proof can be given that there has been true repentance before death, Christian burial may be granted.

The refusal of Christian burial to such sinners is never an injustice. It would be a mockery of all Christ's teachings if those who openly defied Him were granted the rites of the Church after death. Moreover, such refusals are powerful lessons to the living of the terrible penalty of deliberate sin.

The Anti-Catholic Tradition

There is no rancor either in the writing or the publication of this article. It is a study in past history as a background for the understanding of present religious tensions in America.

J. E. Doherty

IN 1930, after a century of mutual distrust, Catholics and Protestants in this country had so adjusted themselves to living with each other that some experts judged that religious bigotry between them was at an end. Today, the same experts say that they do not remember when religious relations were more tense in America. Perhaps some Catholics are partly to blame by their aggressiveness, shouting down the opinions of others, pushing themselves ahead by noise and by number. Perhaps it is time that these learned tact in dealing with non-Catholics.

Perhaps. But a more basic virtue is patience, and an understanding of why Protestants see Catholicism with a jaundiced eye should be even more helpful. Fear of Catholics arises now, not from any new tactic on their part, but from the sudden discovery of eminent Protestant clergymen that the once despised immigrant Church has become formidable and challenging. The real cause is a tradition, as integral to Protestantism as any doctrine and inherited like a defect of vision, that the ascendancy of Catholics can bode nothing but evil.

"Can anything good come from Nazareth?" This was a tradition at the time of Our Lord, and another was: "No prophet shall arise in Galilee." When crucified, Christ had not overcome them, yet because of them He excused His murderers thus: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." The anti-Catholic tradition

is not radically different in our own time, and surely the same attitude is called for.

In the year 1945 *The Christian Century* published a series of eight articles under the title, "Can Catholics Win America?" The present state of tension and siege can be traced back largely to them. Years in preparation, they were on the whole objective and intelligent studies of the Catholic Church's increasing efficiency in all phases of American life. The author, Harold E. Fey, concluded that the American branch of the Catholic Church had arrived at a position of great moral and intellectual prestige, and that, unless Protestants woke up, it could conceivably win America.

That same year the newly elected moderator of the Presbyterians, the Rev. Ewing Vale, set forth on a speaking tour of several large cities rousing his co-religionists to the challenge. Next, the retiring editor of *The Christian Century*, the Rev. Clayton Morrison, sent up his farewell flares. Echoing the first series of articles, he called his, "Can Protestantism Win America?" He outlined a militant campaign. The P. O. A. U. (Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State) was then formed. Ostensibly, it was to keep a high wall between Church and State; in reality, it was meant to keep Catholics from getting any more help from the government.

At this point Bishop Bromley Ox-

nam relaxed from his leftwing social pre-occupations and joined in the fray by concentrating on the hierarchy. Pamphlets then appeared explaining Protestantism in terms of contrast to a Church described as a totalitarian dictatorship. The Sunday paper's sermon page listed more and more titles on pressure groups, recognizable as Catholic, and deploring the threat of the Roman Church.

Finally, the "scholarly" works appeared, those of men like Avro Mankhatten and Paul Blanshard. In seeming fairness, all these reverend gentlemen announced their respect for the religious beliefs of Catholics and aimed at what they called "political aggression." Yet at the very outset *Time* magazine reported the campaign for what it was and warned that whoever sows bigotry reaps a bitter crop. Catholics, accustomed to such attacks through centuries of calumny, noted one outstanding fact: all these essays, books, sermons and speeches were in a long familiar tradition, the one that has made such words as "priestly class, popish, hierarchical, nunnery, Romish, dogmatic, monkish, nun, authoritarian, Jesuitical, etc." smear words in the Protestant mind.

Is there really an anti-Catholic tradition? Cardinal Newman asked this question in England when bigotry was at its height there a century ago. "Do the people of this country," he asked, "receive their notion of the Catholic Church in the way of argument and examination as they would decide in favor of railroads over other modes of conveyance, or on plans of parish relief, or police regulations, and the like? or does it come to them mainly as a tradition which they have inherited, and which they will not question, though they have in their hands abundant reasons for questioning it? I an-

swer without a doubt that it comes to them as a tradition. . . . By tradition is meant what has ever been held, as far as we know, though we do not know how it came to be held, and for that very reason think it to be true, because else it would not be held. Yet this, I maintain, is the sort of ground on which Protestants are so certain that the Catholic Church is a simple monster of iniquity."

To illustrate what this tradition is, the Cardinal quotes from a book called "The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk," which purported to have been written by an ex-nun, and sold in his day more than any other work in both the United States and England. The author "reveals" her experiences in a convent and in this particular selection is describing the fate of one of her companions who refused to strangle infants born within the convent walls.

"I entered the door," she says, "my companions standing behind me, as the place was so small as hardly to hold five persons at a time. The young nun was standing alone, near the middle of the room; she was probably about twenty, with light hair, blue eyes, and a fair complexion." The poor victim was brought before the bishop, who, the writer says, "it was easy to perceive, considered her fate to be sealed, and was determined she should not escape. In reply to some of the questions put to her she was silent; to others I heard her voice reply that she did not repent of words she had uttered, though they had been reported by some nuns who heard them; that she had firmly resolved to resist any attempt to compel her to the commission of the crimes which she detested. She added that she would rather die than cause the murder of harmless babes. 'That is enough, finish her!' said the bishop. Two nuns instantly fell upon the wom-

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an; and in obedience to directions given by the superior, prepared to execute the sentence.

"Then they gag her," the account continues, "and throw her on a bed. In an instant another bed was thrown upon her. One of the priests sprung like a fury upon it with all his force. He was speedily followed by the nuns, until there were so many upon the bed as could find room, and all did what they could, not only to smother but to bruise her. . . . After the lapse of fifteen or twenty minutes, and when it was presumed that the sufferer had been smothered and crushed to death, (the priest) and the nuns ceased to trample upon her and stepped from the bed. All was motionless and silent beneath it. Then they began to laugh."

The ghost writer of this volume has been identified by a New York publisher as a professional writer, a minister in Boston of integrity and high standing, and a personal acquaintance for whom he had high regard. Yet this clergyman was gullible enough to believe completely in the frightful tales of a deranged girl named Maria Monk. Without investigation he had accepted on her word alone that she had been a nun in the convent of Hotel Dieu in Montreal and all the other dreams she related. Arrested not long after for picking the pocket of a temporary companion in a house of ill-fame, Maria Monk died a wretched death in a prison cell. In the meantime, however, a commission headed by the publisher, William L. Stone, traced down her history. They found that the nearest she had been to any convent was in a home for delinquent girls in Montreal, and investigation revealed that not one alleged fact and no detail of her book was true. These findings received little credence; in its first years over 300,000 copies of the book were sold; since it

is still available and still selling it is undoubtedly one of the all time best sellers in this country.

Rural Yankees read these "Awful Disclosures" as they drank patent medicine, highly alcoholic in content. They could feel pious and still get a thrill. William Cobbett, a non-Catholic English historian, traces the tradition of such "revelations" back to its source. For it is as a typical sample of a continuous stream of calumny that this book is significant. He records the large number of landed estates confiscated under Henry VIII from monasteries and convents in England and Ireland. These were given as bribes to powerful English families during the Reformation to win their support against a popular uprising. Till then the monasteries had cared for the poor, the afflicted and the unfortunate; but the disappearance of abbeys and monasteries threw these charges out into the highways and created a serious social problem.

To justify the theft, nothing short of a vicious campaign of vilification against the religious would do. Since many prominent families in England are still living on the fruits of such stolen estates, they are not averse to hearing the worst about monks and nuns. An example is extant in a Reformation play, the most popular play in England prior to those of Shakespeare. Produced in the bawdy times of Queen Elizabeth, it is not possible to cite much of it without offence. One scene is that of a monastery looting. Today it would be greeted as a burlesque farce or a cut from a Mack Sennett comedy; but in those days it was serious drama. Soldiers arrive at the monastery and a monk bribes them to desist from desecrating it by satisfying themselves with the contents of the abbot's chest. When he leads them to

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the chest and they open it, a beautiful young nun jumps out, whereupon all the possibilities for suggestive discourse are exploited.

Now from the time of King John till the Protestant Reformation there were three centuries of robust Catholicity in England. Never was there, moreover, a king of England less suited to be made into a hero than this same King John. He was lustful, inconstant, weak, irreligious and superstitious at the same time. Though he had defied the authority of the Church briefly, this error had cost him the support of his own people, and he died trembling and clinging to whatever consolations the faith could offer him. Yet because he had violated some monasteries and was excommunicated by the Pope, he was looked back upon in Elizabethan times as a precursor of Henry VIII and the fit hero for a calumnious anti-Catholic play. Shakespeare made short work of it by cleaning it up, and writing his own classic version of King John.

The effect of persecution together with such propaganda was disastrous. By the middle of the 17th century prejudice had gone so far that Archbishop Laud, who in the Anglican Church sought a return to Catholic ceremonies, cried out: "It is called superstition nowadays for any man to come with more reverence into a church, than a tinker and a dog into his alehouse." When Charles II showed sympathy to Catholics he got into serious trouble. In the next reign his brother, James II, issued a decree of tolerance, restoring civil liberties to Catholics. As a result he was dethroned.

So obliterated and so discredited was Catholic life by the end of the next century that Cardinal Newman could cite from a reputable contemporary Protestant journal this sadly humorous

account of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. It is from the pen of a well-educated parson: "First, a young priest setteth up a golden, diamond-like star, with a lamp in it, sticking it on the top of a candlestick, then he lighteth fifty candles by means of a wand with an extinguisher and wax candle upon it; then four priests bow, burn incense, and wave a lanthorn before the star; then one of the priests, hiding what he is at, by means of a great shawl about his hands and the foot of the candlestick, taketh up said candlestick, with the lamp and gold star glittering like diamonds, and beginning secretly to tinkle with his finger a bell hid in its foot; whereupon the whole congregation marvelleth much, and worshippeth star, lamp and candlestick incontinently." The author concludes: "This is the power of priests: they are the best play-actors in town. I should be glad to see this published, that I might take it to Father Gordon, to see if he could contradict a word of it."

It may be said that such passages are amusing, excusable, and in any case, harmless, but the facts prove otherwise. In our own country before the War of the Revolution there were thirty Protestant periodicals, all violently anti-Catholic in tone, with such titles as "Priestcraft Unmasked," "The Protestant," "Defender of Our Religious Liberties." Not many years would elapse and the effect of such abuse would be dramatized by the burning of a convent in Charlestown, Mass.

The torch which first ignited the passions of men before it set fire to the convent was a series of false "revelations" on the style of Maria Monk's. The first ones came from England and the author was a Sunday school teacher named Mrs. Martha Butt Sherwood. Many of her novels were written as if they were personal history. In the most

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popular one, called "The Nun," she describes herself as a Turin heiress brought up according to the strict principles of Papists and urged by her own sister to enter the convent. Then she reveals the sinister secrets of these houses of mystery; in gruesome detail she describes the trapdoors and dungeons in which inmates are chained to stone pillars and forced to do penance. The climax comes when she finds herself in a charnel house, filled with moldering bones, and about to die of despair, and she hears a dulcet voice outside. "The lady of the knotted veil has no reason to fear the person who now addresses her." The hero turns out to be the brother of a nun who had died in a dungeon. He managed, Hollywood-style, to climb over the wall and save her. Overcoming many obstacles, such as boosting her over the wall, they win through, are married, and in due time have a blissful household of two sons and three daughters.

Such books rapidly became one of the most popular forms of literature. One of the many who were widely read was Rebecca T. Reed, who wrote "Six months in a Convent." She was the daughter of a farmer, a Protestant, and had been taken in out of charity by the Ursuline Sisters in Charlestown, Mass., fed and clothed by the nuns while she was given small tasks to perform, and remained with them for four months and a week. The high point of her "disclosures" is the scene in which a bishop decrees death for a young nun, but not before demanding that she ask the Almighty to "send down a bushel of gold for the purpose of establishing a college for young men on Bunker Hill." It is not often that a real nun writes in a public newspaper, but Mother Mary Edward St. George, the superioress of the Ursulines, foresaw such serious effects from this book

that she exposed the fraud in all the Boston newspapers. Needless to say, the exposure had no effect on its increasing circulation.

The source book for the "Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk," as well as for many of the fictitious works that followed upon it, is the same. Many of the passages of the "Disclosures" can be found verbatim in a work printed in the year 1731 and called "The Gates of Hell Opened, or, a Development of Secrets." It is completely false, but is still being printed today.

That such drivel could seriously influence the thinking of sane men may seem incredible today, but it is all a necessary part of the history of prejudice. That it did influence men is evident from the Charlestown story. In the month of August, 1854, a young lady named Elizabeth Harrison, employed as a servant in the Ursuline convent at Charlestown, Mass., left in a huff or a fit of hysteria. Later she asked to return and did so, but the rumor spread around town that she was being held a prisoner, each rumor-monger no doubt applying to the case something that he had read in the current anti-convent literature. A group of vigilantes gathered on the evening of August 11, and not even speeches from some of the town fathers could stop them from setting fire to the convent, giving the sisters scarcely time to lead or carry out sixty children and a bedridden woman. The building burned to the ground. Though several attempts were later made to obtain some compensation from the town, no restitution has ever been made for this vandalism.

The site where this convent had stood is clearly visible today from the tower of the church on Brimstone Corner, one of the most famous in Boston. Last year the present pastor of this

church protested vehemently when the city of Boston offered the Good Shepherd nuns an estate it had acquired with the suggestion that it be used to re-create and rehabilitate juvenile delinquent girls. There seems to be almost a direct relation between his protest today and the attitude of the *Protestant Vindicator* a century ago, expressed in these words just about the time of the Charlestown convent burning: "Any man who proposes, or who would vote for the measure which would rob the treasury of the descendants of the Puritans to build Ursuline Nunneries after the model of the Ursuline Nunnery at Quebec, and as the headquarters of the Jesuit Fenwick and his 20,000 vilest Irishmen, must be a raving lunatic."

In 1849 a papal legate, Archbishop Cajetan Bedini, visited this country. Agitation followed and resulted in the formation of a formidable political society. When asked about it, its members answered: "I know nothing," but its purpose was set forth clearly enough in Tisdale's Know-Nothing Almanac: "Anti-Romanism, Anti-Bedinism, Anti-Pope's Toeism, Anti-Nunneryism, Anti-Winking-Virginism, Anti-Jesuitism, and Anti-the-Whole-Sacerdotal-Hierarchyism with all the humbugging mummeries. Know-Nothingism is for light, liberty, education, and absolute freedom of conscience with a strong devotion to one's native soil."

Previous to the whispering campaign against Al Smith and Bishop James Cannon, the most notable personage in the anti-Catholic tradition was Thomas E. Watson. He was the publisher and founder of the Populist party, which in its first year polled more than a million votes with him as its candidate for president of the United States. Watson's magazine reached into every community in the nation. It dis-

claimed any ill will towards individual Catholics but over its editorial column ran the scare head-line: "The Roman Catholic Hierarchy: The Deadliest Menace to Our Liberties and Our Civilization." Typically, the editorial rolled on: "Not always will we tolerate the kidnapping of our children by these Romanist priests. Not always will we submit to their polluting the flower of our womanhood. Heavens above! Think of a Negro priest taking a vow of chastity and then being turned loose among women who have been taught that a priest cannot sin. It is a thing to make one shudder." Watson was indicted several times for sending smut through the mails but he always managed to escape conviction.

To wind up these picturesque specimens of the anti-Catholic tradition, we need only state that nothing in any of them, no matter how crude, has been more insulting than the innuendoes contained in Paul Blanshard's recent books. In Freudian terms they picture nuns as dupes of their romantic feelings, young men recruited to the priesthood through a guilt-complex on sex, women penitents open to the cynical influence of priests, and the confessional as a means of prostituting the souls of all of them.

In answer to all this, someone may say: "But Catholics have their prejudices too." If Catholics are themselves intolerant and bigoted in their attitude toward Protestants, it cannot be constructive to trace the tradition of anti-Catholic prejudice and it would be better to disclose the prejudice of Catholics themselves.

But, in the first place, there exists no tradition among Catholics the like of that which we have described. It is true that Catholics as individuals are not less prone to bigotry and in some cases may be more so than their Prot-

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estant brethren. This however, runs counter to every tradition of their faith. There is, for example, no literature circulated among Catholics that can remotely compare with "The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk." Exposures of men and women evangelists in a semi-fictional vein have been written by popular non-Catholic writers like Sinclair Lewis and Don Marquis, but among Catholics they are practically unknown and would be prohibited for general reading if they had any of the pornographic flavor of the anti-nun-nery stories.

On the other hand it is sometimes charged that propagandists for the Church give a one-sided version of the Reformation, glossing over abuses in the Church, and making caricatures of the Reformation heroes. That this has been done at times no one interested in truth for its own sake would deny. Nevertheless, the Catholic apologetical and historical works most familiar to us have taken a very different line. They follow the principle that truth cannot hurt the Church and they seem to outdo themselves in stating the failings of Catholics. In general, knowing that he is open to charges of prejudice, a Catholic writer quotes from non-Catholic sources when unfavorable judgments are given against the Reformers, and if he is careless of objective truth he has little influence among Catholics.

Secondly, if Catholics do at times appear over-sensitive and muscular and aggressive in defending their faith, is it not to be expected that there will be some reaction to the violently anti-Catholic tradition outlined above? According to all the principles of Catholic spirituality this reaction should be

one of patience, forbearance, forgiveness, tolerance. Catholics are taught, not to meet anger with anger, hatred with hatred, but calmly and clearly to present the positive teachings of their Church both by word and by example. But now and then the anguished cry does break forth, especially when that which is held most dear is represented as vicious and vile. Should not allowance be made for this in the face of the grim provocation?

Due no doubt to the present crisis, almost all Churches are presently gaining in membership. There is a degree of coincidence in these gains, however, which suggests that an anti-Catholic campaign also serves the purpose of beating a drum. The Presbyterians, who sparked the modern attack in 1945, had shown a loss of membership from the year 1930 until that date. Since 1945 they list substantial gains. As for Catholics, from the year 1926 to 1936 the Church increased its membership from about 18,000,000 to about 19,000,000; but from 1936 to 1946 it jumped to 25,000,000 and in the last six years it has jumped to well over 29,000,000. More than statistics, the calibre of converts entering the Church and the influence of the Church in upholding morality are a cause of concern to non-Catholics. Why this should be among sincere Christians separated from the Church can be only bewildering to Catholics. One explanation most certainly is the tradition of calumny which unconsciously prejudices the Protestant mind. In the face of this, Catholics need to continue the practice of patience and understanding and forgiveness, and to leash tightly every temptation to bitterness and retaliation.

Be careful not to fall here, but if you do fall, remember to look to the right.
The view is extraordinary.

Swiss Alpine Guide

Pre-Marriage Clinic

D. F. Miller

Is a Fictitious Wedding Ever Permitted?

Problem: A young man and his girl friend (who is also my friend) ran away and were married by a priest in a different city. The marriage was valid. Now their folks, who are ignorant of the fact that they are already married, want them to have a big church wedding. No one at all knows that they have already been married except myself and the priest and witnesses who were present at the ceremony. May they say nothing and be married again in their own parish church at home? Would they commit a grievous sin if they did so?

Solution: It would be a grievous sin for them to go to their parish priest and make out that they had never gone through a valid marriage ceremony. If by so doing they were to induce the priest to take them through another wedding, they would be making him a party to a fictitious action which he thought to be a genuine sacrament.

At the very least they must take the priest into their confidence. They should tell him all the facts and let him decide what is to be done. In an extreme case, in which great harm would probably come from the parents' learning about the original ceremony, the priest might arrange for the celebration of a nuptial Mass for the couple, at which they could renew their marriage vows. Most likely no nuptial Mass was celebrated at their secret wedding, and they have a right to have such a Mass offered for them.

There is always danger, however, in making use of such a deception, warranted and sinless though it might be in special circumstances. There is the danger that worse repercussions might follow upon the parents' finding out later that the couple had been married than upon their being told what had happened. Even a so-called "secret" marriage becomes a public thing in many ways. There must be witnesses, records, an officiating priest, a license, etc. The couple would be spared much worry if they faced the music at once and permitted their parents to arrange for a nuptial Mass at which a mere renewal of vows would be made. In a majority of cases the anticipated anger of parents turns out to be less serious than was expected, or it soon subsides. In this case, the young couple have much in their favor, in that they were married validly and by a priest.

Prods to Perfection

Quotations and anecdotes from real life, designed to foster practices that should be second nature to the Christian.

J. P. Schaefer

THIS GROUP of thoughts, incidents and stories might well be headed by the title: "What do YOU think of the Mass?" The holy sacrifice of the Mass is the greatest treasure we possess here on earth. By it Calvary is once more and frequently renewed and the merits of Jesus Christ are once more ours to be received and applied. It is the most sublime act of worship that can be offered by a creature to his creator.

In the Mass, God comes down to earth once more and places Himself, as it were, at our disposal. In no better way can we thank God for His uncountable benefits, adore and praise Him, and beg His graces for the needs of our lives, than by our frequent, reverent and joyful attendance at the Mass.

But does it not seem that all too many take the Mass for granted, fail to realize what it really is? Too many attend only because they are forced to do so and, therefore, frequently excuse themselves on the flimsiest of pretexts. They fail to realize that it is not merely their presence that is required, but that it is their privilege to attend and to participate in the Mass. While reading the following incidents and stories, we beg of you to keep in mind just this one question: "What do I think of the Mass?"

A young soldier was obliged to have his thumb amputated without receiving an anaesthetic. He bore the fearful pain without a groan. After the operation was finished he began to cry. The surgeon was surprised that one who had

shown such courage should now give way to a lesser pain.

"You mistake the reason," said the soldier. "I am a priest, and amputation of the thumb means that I can never say Mass again."

(Ed. Note: This is not entirely true, for such a priest could receive special permission to continue to say Mass. The story is narrated because of the obvious message it contains.)

A priest one day saw a man grooming his horse. He approached him and asked him how much time he spent over his horse each day, and was surprised to hear the reply:

"About two hours a day."

"And how much time, may I ask, do you give to your soul?"

"Not too much, I fear," the man answered. "I say my prayers in the morning and evening and on Sundays generally go to Mass."

"Then, my poor man," remarked the priest, "I would rather be your horse than your soul."

One of the most thought-provoking and, we hope, action-provoking sayings of the great Frederick Ozanam was the following:

"The best way to economize time is to lose half an hour each day attending holy Mass."

A favorite story of St. Alphonsus was that of the three merchants who were leaving the city of Gubbio in Italy. One of them, however, determined first to go to a church and hear

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Mass: The other two refused to accompany him, preferring to get an earlier start towards their destination. Upon leaving the city the two merchants crossed a bridge over a river which had become swollen by recent rains. The bridge suddenly capsized and the merchants were drowned. Half an hour later the third merchant arrived at the river and found their bodies on the shore.

A devout person once asked St. Peter Damien why the priest always says '*Dominus Vobiscum*' (The Lord be with you) at the Mass, even though at times there is no one assisting save the server.

"Because," replied the Saint, "we are never alone when we pray. We are always worshipping with the whole Church throughout the world and we pray thus that the presence of the Lord may be in all the faithful on earth."

We are sincerely sorry that there is not sufficient space for more of these stories and incidents. But we do hope that they will cause you to think seriously upon your own appreciation of the holy sacrifice of the Mass. We ask you now to reread them slowly and thoughtfully and while doing so to apply the following questions and perhaps others of your own fashioning to yourself.

'Do I ever attend Mass except when I have to?'

'Do I excuse myself from attending at times for light and trivial reasons?'

'What would it mean to me if the Mass were to be taken away from me; if the privilege or obligation of attending were removed for years or perhaps for the whole of my life?'

'When I attend Mass do I profit as much from it as I could? Here I am not a mere witness. Here I am actually offering the Mass with the priest for myself and my intentions. If I kept such thoughts in mind would it not be easier to overcome my natural tiredness and routine attendance at this great event in my life?'

During this month of November, dedicated as it is in a special way to a remembrance of the poor souls in purgatory, may we make a special plea to you to remember your departed loved ones and friends in your Masses. At every Mass that you attend, remember that there is a special place assigned for their remembrance, the memento for the dead! Theologians tell us that there is no more powerful and efficacious prayer that can be offered for the souls in purgatory than the Holy Sacrifice. *Please* — won't you remember them this month?

We feel sure that if you apply these questions to the preceding stories and incidents, you will appreciate the Mass more. Now may we ask you once more —

What DO you think of the Mass?

What do you DO about Mass?

Duty Before Pleasure

A reporter from the London *Spectator*, loitering in a Lancashire town, saw a funeral procession file by, with a bag of golf clubs reposing atop the coffin in the hearse. To a native he observed:

"By George, that man must have been a golf maniac!"

"Must have been?" repeated the native. "He is! He's got a big match on this very afternoon. That is his wife's funeral."

Are Movies Worse Than Ever?

Somebody (guess who) has been pushing the slogan that "movies are better than ever." We don't like to start an argument, but it seems to us that the above question fits the case more neatly.

L. G. Miller

COMMENT OF one kind or another on movies and movie-makers, as the regular readers of THE LIGUORIAN know, appears only occasionally and in a somewhat desultory fashion in our pages. At intervals, however, the spirit does move us to make some remarks touching on the subject.

In this instance the spirit has been moved by the circumstance in which the writer of these lines found himself not many months past on board an army transport sailing from Leghorn to New York.

During the ten day voyage, a movie was shown each night in the ship lounge. For want of anything better to do in the monotony of such a trip, almost everyone on board attended these film sessions religiously, though most of us had to admit that under ordinary circumstances it would be unusual for us to see ten movies in a year, to say nothing of the space of ten days.

It was quite a concentrated diet of film fare, and instructive to the highest degree in a somewhat indirect fashion. No doubt the recreation officer of that particular transport, the U.S.S. General Hodges, when he set about securing films for the voyage, tried to insure variety in his collection. In other words, I suppose the ten or twelve films were a fair cross-section of the type of entertainment Hollywood is making available these days.

If so, one can readily understand why the movie moguls are worried about their falling box-office receipts.

The only thing that stood out in the films we saw was their uniform mediocrity. Lest I be accused of bias, let me hasten to add that this was not my opinion alone, but the opinion of the majority present, as nearly as I could assess it.

I can remember the names of only a few of these abortive attempts to mine the artistic vein, so little did they impress me. There was something called *The Big Trees*, which had some nice forest scenery and little else to commend it. *Submarine Command* was another, and it furnished a few mild thrills, sandwiched between slices of stale dialogue and creaking plot.

One night we gasped our way through *The Lost World*, but the gasps were not because of the harrowing incidents of the plot, but because the lounge in which we viewed the film was on F deck, deep in the bowels of the ship and pretty well immune from ventilation. The only thing I remember from this movie was that the hero, during a period of some days during which he was cut off from civilization, met every crisis, including an onrush of prehistoric animals, by calmly lighting a cigarette. Although he and his party exhausted their supplies of water, food and ammunition, they seemed to have an inexhaustible supply of tobacco. At the climax of the picture, as the mountain exploded and rained rocks around them, the hero and his friends pulled away from danger in a little boat (which happened to be handy), and

Mr. Randolph Scott spoke his last crisp line and reached in his pocket for a final cigarette. At the end of this picture there was not even polite applause, only a few scattered groans.

There was also a film called *Aladdin's Lamp*; I believe that was the name of it; at any rate, it dealt with that useful object out of the *Arabian Nights*. By simply rubbing this lamp, its possessor was able to summon up as his servant a powerful genii. The story of the lamp is an enchanting one in its original version. What the movie-makers summoned up by rubbing *their* lamp was something else again. Their genii seemed to be compounded mainly of sex, and they even managed to introduce a triangle into Aladdin's hitherto uncomplicated life. The author of *The Arabian Nights*, if he has been made aware of this new version of his tale, is probably exhibiting a decided nervous twitch as he gently trends the Elysian fields.

The other films we witnessed were of approximately the same calibre. I have described the ones listed above not by way of review or advertisement, but in order to make a point. And the point is this, that if there has been a falling off at the movie theatre box-offices, the movie makers might do well to examine their artistic consciences before they look around for deeper sociological or economic reasons, or try to put the blame on television.

The fact of the matter is, it seems to me, that great numbers of the American public, having for years cheerfully and patiently sat through innumerable uninspired movies with threadbare plots and dialogue as dull as dishwater, have suddenly risen up in rebellion. The rebellion, naturally enough, takes the form of staying away from the theatres in droves. The movie-makers had better begin to realize that the old

formulas, tried and tested for so many years, have grown insipid by constant use. The basic pattern of so many movies: boy falls in love with girl, boy falls out with girl, boy patches things up with girl, is beginning to creak, and even the habitués of the neighborhood theatres are protesting against it. And this will be increasingly true whether the boy and girl in question are dressed in society clothes, buckskin or space suits. Science-fiction pictures such as *The Day the Earth Stood Still* and *The Thing* are having their vogue at the moment, it is true, but if the same well-worn formula underlies them, the vogue will pass as quickly as the novelty wears off.

What is needed is a fresh approach to the comparatively untapped wealth of human nature as it is, not as for years the movie-makers have been fictionizing it. In this fictionized version, the boy-girl romance is absolutely essential to the making of a movie; everything in the plot must revolve around it. Every movie, no matter what historical epoch or milieu it deals with, must portray the inevitable progression: boy falls in love with girl, boy falls out with girl, boy patches things up with girl, fadeout. I wonder if the ordinary people are not getting fed up with it; I wonder if they have not long since realized that there is considerably more to life than romance a la Hollywood.

There have been, it is true, some brave attempts to break through the iron ring. John Ford's *The Fugitive* of several years ago springs to mind (even though it bowdlerized Graham Greene's book). A film making the rounds currently is a good example of what can be done. Called *Never Take No For An Answer*, it details the adventures of a small Italian boy and his donkey. The film was made in Italy, and unfortunately (if one may use the word) has

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a deep undertone of religious feeling. There have been several good religious films made in Hollywood, the most recent being the delightful *Angels in the Outfield*. But one hesitates to recommend the subject, in view of the travesties that have appeared in the past. You know the kind, where the beautiful young nun nourishes a secret love for the handsome young aviator who has parachuted accidentally into the convent garden. Ugh!

Even Cecil DeMille's *Quo Vadis*, which is a powerful and absorbing spectacle with some wonderful characterizations, is made to revolve around the threadbare Hollywood formula. Sienkiewicz, in writing his classic, explored and wonderfully illustrated the motivation of the Christians as such. In the new movie version, everything, including the burning of Rome by Nero, is subsidiary to the development of the romance between Marcus and the girl of his choice.

But I suppose it is useless to expect any immediate change of outlook on the part of those who direct the fortunes of the cinema. Take the case of Miss Marilyn Monroe, currently being described loudly and by every available means of communication as the living embodiment of sex and Hollywood's answer to the movie depression. Quite evidently she is being given the full publicity treatment by her studio.

Miss Monroe, at some period in her past, was prevailed upon, seemingly without much persuasion being needed, to pose in the nude for a calendar picture, which has since been printed by the thousands. As to the young lady herself, since she has publicly professed

to see nothing wrong in her action, let us force ourselves to the charitable conclusion that she is perhaps a little short of outstanding in the calibre of her mental equipment.

We can, however, admit no such charitable interpretation in regard to the major movie company which has subsequently played up every possible sexy angle in pushing her to the forefront. The people responsible for this glorification of raw sex, from the president of the studio on down, are more than commonly intelligent. They must be well aware that we live in a sex-ridden age, that the rate of sex crimes has increased by 100 percent within the last generation. They must be well aware that a clever campaign of public sex-stimulation such as they are centering around Miss Monroe can only add fuel to a fire already raging almost beyond control. Yet they can callously, for the sake of a few quick bucks at the box office, throw aside any lingering sense of public responsibility.

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It is this sort of thing which makes us regard the movie-making industry with a somewhat jaundiced eye. Criticism of the kind expressed in this article invariably brings the response: "There are lots of good people in Hollywood." We do not doubt it for a moment. We only say that there is in the movie industry a powerful motivating spirit which is essentially pagan and immoral. And we cannot feel too badly about it if the people who operate in that spirit lose their shirts. We wish they *would* lose their shirts, if it might keep them from losing their souls.

For Sale. Three Bedroom House. Easy Payments. . . . A family with children need it and can't get it because they can't afford it. A family of two and a pet will get it and stay childless in order to afford it.

—The Northland

For Non-Catholics Only

F. M. Louis

Did Priests Invent Purgatory?

Objection: The Catholic teaching about purgatory seems to be fabricated for the purpose of inducing people to hand over money to priests for the release of their friends from so-called purgatory. Your Church teaches that there is a terrible fire in purgatory; that souls have to stay in that fire for thousands of years unless their friends pray for their release; that the least suffering in purgatory is worse than all the suffering possible on earth. Is not all this psychologically designed to play on people's sympathy and love and to incite them to make donations?

Solution: This objection loses much of its force for anyone who knows what is the precise teaching of the Church about purgatory. First of all, it is not a dogma of the Catholic Church that there is fire in purgatory, nor even that there is something similar to fire which causes pain. The Catholic Church has defined nothing about purgatory except that unpurified souls are detained there as in a place of punishment and suffer "purgatorial pains." The chief of these pains is that of being deprived of God's presence, who is recognized after death to be the source of all good and all joy.

Secondly, the Church teaches nothing specific about the length of time souls must be detained in purgatory. This is entirely a matter of conjecture. Some theologians have conjectured that the time is exceedingly long; others that it is very brief. Probably the truth lies between the extremes.

Thirdly, though St. Thomas held that the slightest pain of purgatory is worse than all the sufferings one could endure in this world, this is not a dogma, but, again, merely a matter of conjecture.

That priests have fabricated the existence of purgatory and made up imaginative stories about it to draw money from people is a gross fabrication itself. Our Lord taught that there are some sins that may be and must be atoned for after death. He taught that there is a loving union between souls still struggling on earth and those that have passed into the next world without deserving to be condemned to hell, and it is a part of such a loving union that mutual help be given wherever possible. He taught that good prayers are always heard by God, and that the Mass is the greatest prayer of all. Priests urge people, therefore, to pray for their dead, without receiving any donation. They also urge them to have Masses said for their dead, for which they may receive a stipend. But that the thought of such stipends made priests invent purgatory is historically, psychologically, dogmatically and economically absurd.

Readers Retort

In which readers are permitted to express their minds about articles and opinions published in *The Liguorian*. Letters must be signed and full address of writer must be given, though city and name will be withheld from publication on request.

Cortland, N. Y.

"This letter is written by a girl who was trained in a Catholic college to teach in a public school and who is now a mother. It is my contention that we have not put our views on education across to non-Catholics in a clear and logical way. I am proud of our public education system in America, this land of compromises and adjustments, and was taught to be so in education classes in college. I don't like to think I would be able to put my heart into teaching in a system that wasn't good enough for my children. Also, I would fight to the death for our right to establish parochial schools. I don't want to see government regimentation of education. I agree with church leaders that in the majority of cases Catholic children should receive at least some education in a parochial school. Alas, so many of us fail that the Catholic school must do the job for us; either the parents are too lazy, or haven't the ability or knowledge of their religion to teach it. Then the parochial schools must take over. But there are others who want to exercise their rights as parents and teach their own babies their religion. When that responsibility is taken care of by the parents, I think that Catholic children can be allowed to attend the great American public schools and three cheers for these schools and all the good Catholic men and women teaching in them. A non-Catholic looks at a college such as the one I attended as subversive, and they've good reason to. What are these Catholics doing—they build a factory to produce public school teachers and are not allowed to send their children to them! They have an idea that we are teaching in public schools to fill the minds of their children with doctrine and dogma,

along the line of Communist systems. Let's put it out in the open and explain why we have parochial schools and let the Catholics who teach in public schools be respected for the fine job they are doing, by the whole community, instead of being looked on with suspicion. . . . Yes, my children are in a public school. The principal and many of the teachers are Catholics. Most of the children are Protestants. I teach them their religion. I am proud of our great country, America. I am proud of our great religion, too, and I wish that it could be respected by all men.

P.S. In the name of Catholic teachers I beg you to publish this. Please don't edit it without further correspondence. And please use my initials and the name of my college if you publish it.

Mrs. R. M. G.

We agree that many Catholics are doing a wonderful job of teaching in public schools and secular colleges. Whatever suspicion or odium is levelled at them because they are Catholics is due to ignorance or bigotry. As good Catholics and loyal Americans they bear these things patiently. But when our correspondent makes their presence in public schools a valid reason for sending her children there, she is not talking as a genuine Catholic herself. The Church commands, under pain of mortal sin, that all Catholic parents send their children to Catholic schools, if such are available, unless they have the permission of their bishop to do otherwise. Our correspondent may have decided that the Church is wrong in so commanding, but if she has, then she has placed herself outside the Church. That is why it is perfectly logical that parents who refuse to send their children to a Catholic school

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when they can, are considered unworthy to receive the sacraments. The law in the matter is no reflection on the teaching ability of parents, nor on the good Catholics who teach in public schools. It is based on the child's need of religious formation both in the home and in the school. We beg this mother to meditate on the necessity of obedience for her salvation, to send her children to her parochial school, to confess her past disobedience, and so make herself worthy to receive Holy Communion.

The editors

Bloomington, Ill.

"When I first read the secular press accounts of the SDS modesty in dress program, I thought that perhaps the girls had received rough handling from tongue-in-cheek reporters. Having read the account in the September Sideglances, I am amazed that the secular press so admirably restrained itself in withholding the ridicule that the SDS rules invite. They sound like the product of a dissolute old man drooling as he searches for evil where it doesn't exist. There is so much acceptance of immoral and amoral conduct in our materialistic world which calls for vigilance on the part of Catholic young people that when they start hollering about underarm cleavage (whatever that is) it is time to reevaluate and to concentrate on some real dangers. I'm positive that when I wear my levis to do the weekly shopping I'm not attractive; but I'm just as positive that I'm not a cause of temptations to the male sex.

Mrs. B. S."

The question of the propriety of levis may be disputable on the score of modesty, but there are thousands of people who rejoice that the SDS code mentioned them with disfavor on the score of what our correspondent gladly admits — their unfeminine ugliness. Immodesty can be added to this when they fit like tights. We doubt

that very many girls and women will be confused about the directive concerning "cleavage". And any girl or woman who sees no relationship between widespread immodest dress and immoral and amoral conduct could stand a little talk on the facts of life. Stay with us and we'll give one or the other in THE LIGUORIAN.

The editors

St. Paul, Minn.

"I have just finished reading your leaflet, quoted from THE LIGUORIAN, entitled, 'Why Catholics Do Not Take Part in Protestant Services.' I thanked God again for my salvation, for the freedom I have in Christ, and for your address giving me another opportunity to witness to the peace and glory which Christ can give to one who simply trusts in His redeeming work alone. . . . I do not intend to win you to Christ by reason or argument for I do not have the time or space to go into this. Would you read it, I could flood you with tons of argument, literature printed and my own works. I do, however, purpose to direct your mind to the love of Christ and the peace and joy of His atoning sacrifice. . . . I know full well that you believe that there is a God and in Jesus Christ, but you have never experienced the peace that comes from submitting your sins to Him and quit trying to work out your own salvation through the means of the teachings of an organization filled with hypocrisies, hatred and blasphemy toward God as well as their fellow-men. Won't you throw off the superstition and fear with which the Roman Church holds its followers and read the literature which I have enclosed with a seeking heart? I shall be praying that the devil may be driven from you and that Christ shall come in.

N. S."

But we have found the peace of Christ, in frequent confession (according to the words of Christ to His priests, "Whose sins

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you shall forgive they are forgiven,"); in daily Holy Communion (according to the words of Christ, "He that eateth Me shall live by Me forever,"); in submission to the Catholic Church (according to the words of Christ to His Church, "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.") In forty years of study and meditation we have found no superstition and fear, no hypocrisy or hatred or blasphemy in the teachings of Christ as found in the Bible and promulgated by His Church to all men and all ages.

The editors

Chicago, Ill.

"Having just read the article 'Don't Be Afraid of the Catholic Church,' in the May LIGUORIAN, I thought that it would be a fine piece for distribution among non-Catholics whom we encounter in our work. I am a member of the Legion of Mary in my parish and we are knocking at every door in its area and making inquiries. Where we find non-Catholics we try to leave a piece of literature. The article I mention will be most suitable for this purpose. Will you please let me know if or when copies might be available?

J. L."

The article is in process of being printed as part of a 10c pamphlet. It will be ready about January 1st. Orders for it may be placed now, at \$7.50 a hundred.

The editors

Read Island, B. C.

"Is the article on 'finding Jesus' (August) really supposed to be a transcript of fact? If so, your contributor must have come across some peculiar Protestants. There are, unfortunately, Catholics who have mastered the technique of high pressure salesmanship, and can overbear people with sheer weight of words and go away thinking that they have had good success when, as a matter of fact, they have only left behind a

justifiable irritation. But, assuming that this is not a case in point, I am afraid that any of your readers are in for a sad disappointment if they are led by this article to imagine that, in conversation with any Protestant who knows the Bible, they will get away with such a flagrant misquotation as making Mary the subject of the verb in John 2-11 ('He manifested His glory'), or get any sort of a Protestant at all to accept the deduction that because Jesus obeyed Mary when He was a little boy, He obeys her now. . . . Forgive my criticism. THE LIGUORIAN is so good that I hate its having even the appearance of not being as good as it might.

B. W."

It is surely not far-fetched to conclude that, when the Bible (John, 2-11) says that Christ manifested His glory by changing water to wine immediately after Mary had asked Him to do something for the embarrassed young newlyweds, she was an instrument of that manifestation according to His will. Nor is it ascetically illogical to accept the example of the God-man's obedience to Mary His Mother as an indication of His will that she have great intercessory power with Him always. It is true that these arguments will not always appeal to Protestants, but this is chiefly because so often they have been brought up not in mere ignorance or neutrality about Mary, but in traditional Protestant opposition to her place in the economy of salvation as it may be drawn from the Scriptures. This does not sponsor a good argument for being silent about the truth.

The editors

Brooklyn, N. Y.

"Under the heading, 'The Opening of School,' in the September issue, comments are made that represent the most tortuous piece of reasoning I have yet seen on the subject of education. I refer to the passage that says 'the best policy for a mother to follow whose child complains that a

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Sister punished him in school is to give him another punishment herself to fill in what the Sister undoubtedly left out. . . . In fairness to any child who comes home with a complaint that he has received a punishment in school, whether from a Sister or anybody else, do you not feel that the intelligent thing for the parents to do is to have a conference with the teacher to find out the cause for the punishment? After all, it is the child's privilege to make mistakes in the class-room, and if anybody is going to hang the fear of punishment over his head, we cannot expect that he will receive a well-rounded education. It is falsely charged, I believe, that Catholic schools use corporal punishment as a form of discipline. No one has a right to inflict such punishment but the parents. Therefore, it was a source of disappointment to see your magazine making an outlandish statement like the above.

J. O'S."

Corporal punishment is so frowned on and so seldom used in Catholic schools today, that it was not even in our mind when we spoke of a child being punished in school. We meant punishment in the form of being made to stay after school, or to write a lesson a dozen times, or of being deprived of recess. It was also taken for granted that parents would use intelligence in adopting the suggestion that school punishments be added to at home. If there be any ground for a parent's thinking that an innocent child was punished, of course the teacher should be conferred with. Today we feel that there is less chance of a child's being hurt by undue fear of punishment than that its character will remain undeveloped because it is so seldom punished at all.

The editors

Manchester, England

"Let me say how much I enjoy reading THE LIGUORIAN, which I consider the best publication of its kind in existence, and worthy of much wider circulation in Eng-

land than it seems to have. Apparently the only advertising it receives over here is from word of mouth on the part of the few subscribers. I feel sure that a little publicity now and then in our English weekly press would reap big dividends.

P. G. Mc."

We hope that, until we can get around to some formal approach to potential readers in England and other countries outside the United States, present readers in those countries will do a good job of word-of-mouth advertising for us. We have at least some readers in just about every country of the world.

The editors

Superior, Wis.

"Seldom do I write letters to editors, but I deeply feel the urge to plead with you to keep THE LIGUORIAN as it is. Please, please, don't ever change either the cover or the contents of your magazine. When I am through with my copies they go to a young priest in Mettippatti, South India, who writes, 'I find so much good material for my talks and sermons, especially in THE LIGUORIAN.' I wish your magazine went to more foreign countries where it could do so much good.

Mrs. D. L. E."

We receive many requests from poor missionaries in India, Japan, Ceylon, and other distant countries for THE LIGUORIAN. Anyone who would like to give some Christmas presents to the poor could be sure of great appreciation by helping us to keep such petitioners supplied with THE LIGUORIAN.

The editors

Utica, N. Y.

"I have just finished reading the August issue of THE LIGUORIAN, my first copy. I am impelled to tell you that never in thirty years have I read such an enchanting, exalting, euphoric and explanatory magazine. Congratulations!

Dr. A. E. S."

Obstacles to a Vocation

Last month the signs of a vocation to a higher life were outlined for teen-agers. Here they are made aware of the obstacles they may have to overcome if they aspire to a priestly or religious life.

B. J. Krieger

AS SOON as any young boy or girl begins to give serious reflection to the thought of vocation to the higher life the devil gets busy. He is on the alert to see how each will react to the heavenly invitation. The wily spirit of evil can estimate and foresee to a great extent the amount of good to be accomplished by a single vocation, faithfully followed, and also the fatal consequences that may result to hundreds of souls, if a single vocation can be frustrated. For why should the devil go to the trouble of tempting thousands of persons individually, when he can attain his wicked purpose by spoiling just one vocation? For each vocation that he ruins he reaps a harvest of souls. And if anyone considers the relatively few boys and girls who make an effort to enter the priesthood or the religious state, one cannot but conclude that the demon is very successful in his schemes.

The devil does his best with teen-agers, when their passions begin to develop. And he works on their imagination whether they realize it or not. He paints the pleasures of the world, especially the pleasures of sex, in the most attractive colors, and that is why so many vocations are neglected and lost. And so, should you entertain the idea of embracing the higher life, you must expect the assaults of the evil spirit.

When the devil cannot get the young people to give up the notion of following Christ, he frequently induces them under various pretexts at least

to postpone carrying out their plans. "You are too young, you have no experience, you don't know your own mind. You must see the world for a while and you must know what it is like to make a wise choice. You will have plenty of time later to give it up," and so on. If he can get a boy or girl to wait or delay, he feels sure that he has scored a victory, for he will have ample opportunity to lure his victim into a love of the world by picturing the vanities of life with such captivating charm as finally to smother entirely the idea of a higher vocation.

Of course the devil is not responsible for all the losses of vocation. Many do not need a devil to lead them astray: they neglect the sacraments and their devotion to the Mother of God. They do not guard their precious treasure, and of course concupiscence and the abuse of grace will do the rest.

Some parents oppose their children's desire to serve the Church or to enter religion. Either they want them to get married or they fear to lose them. They may be very solicitous for the temporal welfare of their sons and daughters, giving them a good education, providing them with the opportunity of learning a trade or a profession or trying to help them make a good marriage, but often they actually hamper them and put all kinds of obstacles in the way of their vocation to the higher life. They dread to have a vocation in their family as if it were a calamity. No wonder that our Lord declares, "A

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man's enemies are those of his own household." (Matt. 10-36.) And such foolish parents, especially doting mothers, encourage familiarity between the sexes by introducing their young sons and daughters to juvenile social functions, with parties and receptions and dances, when they should be studying their lessons and playing healthful games with suitable companions of their own sex and age.

This is a sad commentary on Catholic life. So many Catholic homes are no longer sanctuaries where children grow up protected from the enticing snares of the world. They are allowed to do as they please, without restraint, without any sense of obligation or submission to parental control, just at the time when they need the sound advice of a good father and a devoted mother, and when the experience of their elders should be impressed upon their minds and hearts. Some parents don't seem to care where their children go or with whom they associate, or what kind of school-work they do. They are satisfied to be rid of them as much as possible. As a consequence, boys and girls whom God wants for His special service grow up in utter selfishness and worldly-mindedness, and sometimes they become the scourge of silly parents, and break their hearts and bring lasting shame on their names.

Parents do not lose their sons and daughters when they enter religion. But one who is married is in a certain sense lost to the parents; for the responsibilities of married life leave little opportunity for them to concern themselves about the old home and frequently they sever all connection with it. But those who enter God's service do not make new family alliances. And though separated from their parents, their affections remain true and loyal and they think of them as in their

home-days, and never cease to beg God to shower His best blessings upon them.

A Catholic mother who had several daughters was always urging her two oldest girls to get married. Day after day she reminded them that they would soon be out of their teens and that it was high time for them to be looking around for a suitable husband. She tried to induce one of the girls who was under her thumb to marry a man who may have been a fine specimen but for whom the girl had no attraction. She did not love him and one day the pressure put upon her by her mother was more than she could bear, and in desperation she ran away and married a fellow of her acquaintance who, in the opinion of her mother, was anything but a fine prospect. But it was not long before the mother was fully reconciled, even though the marriage did not turn out to be a particularly happy one.

The other daughter made up her mind to enter the convent. She often meditated on the words of Christ: "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." (Matt. 10-37) But as she knew the rumpus it would cause she kept her intention a profound secret from her mother until she was of age and about ready to leave home. When she revealed her plans her mother carried on scandalously, and even went into a rage. She abused the girl, she abused the nuns, she abused the priests; in her hysterical fury she tried to tear the clothes off her daughter. But this girl was made of sterner stuff than her sister. She stood her ground, and insisted upon her right to live her life as she thought she should. The mother ran to the daughter's room shouting, "I'll burn every stitch of your clothing and I'll see to it that you do not leave this house."

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But the girl had foreseen all this and had sent whatever she wanted to take with her to a friend's house several days before. When there were no clothes to burn, the mother in her fury screamed so loudly that the neighbors thought she was being murdered. The girl left and when the mother discovered some days later to what convent she had gone, she called the sisters and told them that she was coming over to talk to her daughter. They agreed to let her come, but they warned her that if she caused any disturbance her daughter would be sent, as she had requested, to another convent of the order in a distant city. This girl has been in the convent many years. She is a happy nun. And now the only consolation of the aged mother in her declining years is to spend a little while every month with this daughter in the convent. She is a very nervous old lady and she says she cannot visit her other children because her grandchildren drive her crazy.

Anything approaching coercion or excessive urging by parents or anyone else in this matter of vocation, is not only to be disapproved, but is strongly to be condemned; but encouragement is not to be given grudgingly or altogether withheld. The great St. Thomas Aquinas asserts that one who encourages another to follow his or her vocation is deserving of a heavenly reward. And instead of putting hindrances in the way of their children's vocation, parents should feel honored that God has chosen one of their own flesh and blood for His special service.

We occasionally hear a boy or girl say, "I'd like to be a priest or a sister. But I am afraid to try it. I think it would be too difficult." The priesthood or the religious state is not made for weak, spineless characters, nor for moody, temperamental, frivolous dis-

positions, or fickle minds that flit about like butterflies on flowers or change like a weathervane in the wind. There are difficulties in every walk of life. Nothing worthwhile is ever accomplished without courage or effort. You must put your trust in God and say with St. Paul, "I can do all things in Him Who strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4-13).

"But what if I do try and then fail? Won't that be terrible? I'll have to hide my head in shame and dodge everyone that ever knew me as if I had committed a crime." No, you won't. It is no disgrace for a boy who enters the seminary or for a girl who enters the convent to leave and return home if they find they are not fitted for a higher vocation. They deserve praise for having made the attempt. They have more backbone than one who is too cowardly to try for fear of failure.

We sometimes hear it said: "It is so hard to tell what to do and I may make a mistake." Marriage is a very serious step in life; it entails many cares and responsibilities, and brings many tribulations, but you don't find many who say, "I'd like to try it, but maybe I'll be making a mistake in getting married." Marriage is the oldest institution in the world. God is the author of it. And the vast majority of men and women are called to this state. It is something very honorable and very sacred, and we must hold it in high and holy veneration. Christ raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament, and it binds one baptized man and one baptized woman to live together until death parts them, so that neither the wife nor the husband can ever validly marry again as long as their partner is alive. But not all by any means are fitted for this state.

And yet so many young people, blinded by false love or carried away

by stupid infatuation, get married, and then they find out that they have made a terrible mistake. That is one mistake that can never be corrected. Only death can break the tie that binds them. Now it is hardly possible for one who is honest and truthful to make such a mistake in regard to the priesthood or the religious life. Judicious superiors will be the first to advise a young man or a young woman to leave and go back to the world, if they are in the wrong place. And what about the danger of faltering, wavering souls, that remain irresolute and come to no decision, and make the mistake of not embracing the higher life, if God wants them? If one makes the mistake of entering the seminary or a religious order, one can stop before it is too late; because one goes through a long period of trial, before one is accepted or takes vows. But one cannot change one's mind or retrace one's steps after one has made the mistake of getting married, or of marrying the wrong person. Such remain bound by their marriage vows for the rest of their days.

And that is the reason that so many men and women are unhappy in the married state; that is why there is so much discontent in family life, why there are so many broken homes, because individuals made the mistake of getting married or of marrying the wrong person; but in many more instances than people think, it is because the wife or the husband or both have missed their vocation. They should have become priests or religious brothers or nuns.

It is true that there are trials and crosses in every state of life. This earth is a vale of tears and the older we grow the more we come to realize that there is more sorrow and disappointment in the world than joy and beauty. And we won't get rid of the disagreeable

things of life until we leave this land of exile. But all things considered, there is no peace and happiness like the peace and happiness of the religious life. No wealth or pleasure or honorable station in the world can compare with the joy and contentment of a soul that gives itself entirely to God.

Nothing that the world has to offer can compensate for the glorious privilege of dwelling under the same roof with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. There is no surer and safer way of increasing one's merit than by the spiritual helps of the religious life, by the observance of the rules and by following the good example of companion-religious, who teach inspiring lessons of contempt of the world and devotedness to God. It is especially the practice of religious obedience which makes the most insignificant actions most meritorious and lays up treasure in heaven, where neither the moth can devour, nor the rust consume, and which thieves cannot steal.

Some hesitate because they want to be free; they don't like to take orders from others. There is nothing in subjection by a priest to obedience to his bishop, or by a member of a religious order to lawful superiors, that is contrary to true independence of spirit, if we do it to please God. Jesus in his hidden life is the true model of all Christians. He went down to Nazareth and "He was subject to them." Subject to whom? To Mary, His dear Mother, and to St. Joseph, His foster-father. "He was subject to them." (Luke 2-51) The God of heaven and earth subject to His creatures! Would anyone dare say that Our Lord would do anything unworthy of His sublime dignity and divine greatness? And in this subjection He lived until He was thirty years old, until He began His public life of teaching and working miracles.

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This is a lesson we have yet to learn more thoroughly, not only when we forget ourselves so as to be impertinent, insubordinate, or openly rebellious; but also when we obey grudgingly or in a sullen manner.

Think of the obedience worldlings have to give to hold a job or a position. Very few can occupy the higher places and all those under them have to do as they are told, and if they disobey, even if they are not at once discharged, they are spoken to very harshly and bidden not to let it happen again, or else they will have to find work elsewhere. And as they know this is not always so easy, they swallow their pride and knuckle down for the sake of supporting their families and keeping a roof over their heads and the wolf from the door. And then the sad thing is that often, after spending the best part of a lifetime with a firm and they are getting on in years, they are told that their services are no longer required. That is the reward of their obedience in a cold, cruel, heartless world.

I am not saying there will not be things unpleasant for nature, and contrary to our inclinations, in the priesthood or the religious state. I am only asserting that notwithstanding all the hardships and disappointments that come to every creature in this land of sorrow, there is no happiness in the world like to that which those enjoy, who know that from morning to night, and year in and year out, they are engaged in carrying out to the best of their ability the work which our Lord came on earth to do. "And everyone that hath left house or brethren or sisters or father or mother or lands for my sake, shall receive a hundred-fold and shall possess life everlasting." (Matt. 19-29)

Always remember this, the follow-

ing of a vocation to the higher life, like the practice of all virtue, depends upon the free will of every individual. Will you or will you not keep God's commandments? Will you or will you not accept the Lord's invitation to the higher life? It depends on you. And yet without God you can do nothing. That means that God's grace must precede and accompany and finish every supernatural action, and one's use of one's free will in corresponding with it. Every priest and every brother and every nun may truthfully say: "I am a priest or a brother or a nun of my own free will. No one has forced me to be what I am. It is the life of my choice." But at the same time they must admit that they are what they are through the grace of God, Who prepared them and enlightened them, and strengthened them, and aided them to embrace the life which they of their own free choice chose to live.

Take the example of attending Holy Mass, and receiving daily Holy Communion. A daily communicant may truthfully affirm that it is of his own accord and volition that he approaches the holy table every day, but it is God's grace that inspires him and gives him the opportunity and the determination and strength to carry out this practice and to be faithful to it. So that it is really by the goodness and providence of God Who aids him by His grace that he is a daily communicant. How many others could follow the same holy practice? They are too unconcerned, too indifferent or too careless to cooperate with grace and make the effort to do so.

And so too, with regard to vocation. There are too many ungenerous souls. They count the cost and for them it is too much. And that is why, in spite of all the work there is to be done for the welfare of the Church, there are so few

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to do it. Dioceses are sorely in need of priests. Religious orders are woefully lacking the numbers needed to further the works for which they were founded. Catholic schools are crying for sisters or brothers to staff them; hospitals, orphanages, and other institutions are short-handed, and are operating with skeleton crews for want of the necessary numbers of nursing sisters and brothers. The crying need of the Church today is for vocations and more vocations. Yes, indeed, "The harvest is great but the laborers are few." (Luke 10-2).

And again why are there so few? Is it because God does not call a suffi-

cient number to labor in His cause? Oh, no, God calls as many as are needed. But so many, so very many, turn a deaf ear to His call; so many, so very many, do not heed His loving invitation. Like the young man in the Gospel they refuse to make the sacrifice; they are carried away by the desire for earthly goods, earthly riches, earthly honors and pleasures. Now the great question is: WILL YOU BE ONE OF THEM? Think it over seriously and honestly, and beg God to help you to do what is best for your immortal soul. Your future is in your own hands. Make the most of it, before you are too old.

Route Without Routine

Even a dull and commonplace job can be made a striking and inspiring thing by the use of imagination and unselfishness.

Take the case of a certain mail carrier in an Oregon community: A correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor* describes his activity as follows:

"We were summer residents at Bremerton. The community was new to us, and the first ring of our doorbell had been the postman checking on our names and explaining his rings. He was a ruddy, cheerful individual who passed the time of day in a manner that made you feel welcome in the brotherhood of his route.

"Later we noticed what a phenomenal memory our postman had for names and faces. Whenever he met a member of the household anywhere, he greeted us by name. Sometimes we called him the Pied Piper because a retinue of dogs and children usually heralded his approach and followed in his wake.

"One morning a typewritten note was left in the box, informing us that our carrier was taking a two-weeks vacation. It introduced his substitute by name, and asked us to show him the friendly cooperation that always made this route a pleasure to serve."

Danger Within Us

The following pertinent answer to the question "What is the greatest enemy of freedom?" was given by H. B. Taylor in an address before the Engineering Institute of Canada, as quoted by the *Curtis Courier*:

"I am convinced that the arch-enemy of freedom is not some foreign country with an alien philosophy, as so many believe, but something that dwells in you and me and in all men. That something is the glorification of position, privilege, prestige, possessions and power for their own sake. It is selfishness and greed, and it breeds jealousy and hate and conflict. It is a powerful force bidding for the mind and heart of every man. It is called materialism."

Portrait of Christ

The Poverty of John the Baptist

Christ manifested His love of poverty and the poor in many ways, in none more clearly than in the poverty He destined for His friend and precursor, St. John.

R. J. Miller

OUR LORD made sure that His immaculate Mother and St. Joseph, His foster father, would have a poor and hard life. He did the same for his great Precursor, St. John the Baptist.

He shall be *great* before the Lord

said the angel who predicted his birth; and Our Lord Himself said:

Among these born of woman there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist.

Yet the kind of life laid out by God for this man of greatness, this greatest of the prophets, was one of almost unparalleled destitution and humiliation.

Let us review this strange paradox of greatness and poverty.

St. John the Baptist was great before he was born; and this pre-natal greatness serves as a kind of measure or indication of the greatness of the rest of his life.

He is the only human being of whom it seems certain that he was freed from original sin while in his mother's womb. The Blessed Virgin never contracted original sin at all; and there is a pious belief that one or the other of the Saints, for instance, St. Joseph and the prophet Jeremias, shared in St. John's distinction of being freed from original sin before birth. But in the case of St. John it is more than a pious opinion; it has been a constant tradition throughout the history of Chris-

tianity.

His birth was extraordinary too. St. Gabriel the Archangel, in the prediction he made to St. Zachary, the father of St. John, had something special to say about this birth:

Many shall rejoice in His nativity.

It is true that at his birth the Gospel says that his mother's

neighbors and kinfolk heard that the Lord had showed His great mercy to her; and they congratulated with her.

Only we are tempted to wonder if the "neighbors and kinfolk" of poor old St. Elizabeth and St. Zachary were really numerous enough to be called "many" as they rejoiced, and if by the same token their little family festivity in the hill country of Judea is all that was intended by the angel when he said:

Many shall rejoice in his nativity.

As a matter of fact there has been rejoicing on the feast of the nativity of St. John all down through the centuries of the Christian era. In the Latin countries particularly, St. John's eve and St. John's Day are a time of unusual holiday gaiety, with shouting children, gay elders, even midsummer fireworks. And coming as it does on June 24, the celebration in these countries reminds

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a visitor from the United States of the Fourth of July celebrations at home in the old days of firecrackers and fireworks; at any rate there are "many" who are "rejoicing" on the feast of the nativity of St. John the Baptist still today, almost two thousand years after the event. May we not believe that this childlike rejoicing by simple Christian people was also included in the angel's prophecy: "Many shall rejoice in his nativity"?

And while we are trying to find instances of "many" people rejoicing in connection with the nativity of St. John, perhaps we may mention another interesting case of "rejoicing" which may be taken as a kind of verification of the angel's prediction.

The hymn sung in the Church's official prayer or "Office" for the First Vespers of the feast of St. John's nativity has for its first stanza the following:

*UT queant laxis
REsonare fibris
Mlra gestorum
FAMuli tuorum:
SOLve polluti
LABii reatum,
SAncte
IOannes.*

Now the Gregorian music accompanying this hymn for hundreds of years has as the first note in each of the lines above the successive notes of the "diatonic scale": do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, do. And historians of music tell us that the original form of this scale was taken precisely from the first syllables indicated above: ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la, sa, jo. Singers down the centuries, then, as they warble the diatonic scale with more or less rejoicing, and in doing so repeat consciously or unconsciously notes and syllables from a

hymn composed and sung in honor of the nativity of St. John the Baptist, may also be said to be doing their bit towards the fulfillment of the angel's prophecy: "Many shall rejoice in his nativity."

Such was St. John, great before he was born, great on his very birthday:

What a one, think ye, this child shall be?

asked the country people at his birth; and the wonder of that question was amply fulfilled in his life.

When "the day of his manifestation to Israel" came (as St. Luke calls it), the people were drawn to him in throngs from every part of Palestine and from every walk of life: city and country, rich and poor, educated and ignorant; the pious and the sinner, holy men from the temple in Jerusalem and political racketeers and professional soldiers: this truly extraordinary man seemed to have a charm for them all.

Even King Herod, the "fox", as Christ called him, the unbelieving political juggler and straddler who actually put St. John in prison and gave the order for his murder, nevertheless felt a very definite respect and reverence for the man he locked up in jail and then put to death.

His wife Herodias, of course, was the real villain in the piece; it was she who had sworn to have the head of St. John. But for a long time she could not prevail upon her husband:

Now Herodias laid snares for John and wanted very much to have him put to death, but she could not.

Meanwhile, with St. John languishing in the royal dungeons, Herod still could not rid himself of his awe:

Herod feared John, knowing him to be a

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just and holy man, and kept him guarded;
and when he heard him, did many things;
and he heard him willingly.

And even after the death of St. John, Herod's superstitious fear still persisted. When first told of Our Lord's miracles, this is what he said:

John I beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things? It is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead!

So much for Herod the "fox".

There was another individual who had great respect for St. John; namely, Jesus Christ; and it is another indication of the unique power of St. John's character that he could have won the respect of two persons so completely different as Herod Antipas and Jesus Christ.

But "respect" is unquestionably the word to describe Our Lord's attitude to St. John, especially as compared with His attitude to others among His friends and followers.

Towards Our Lady and St. Joseph there was also respect, of course, but over and above the respect in their case, or mingled with it, there was the intimacy and unconstrained ease and happiness of family life.

In the case of the apostles, again, while He loved them and stood up for them if need be against His enemies, there was nevertheless so much slowness of understanding, so much petty bickering even in their following of Him, that it would almost seem they did not care to give Him an opportunity to respect them, but rather always had to be treated like eager but backward and unpredictable children.

For instance, He once gave St. Peter an extremely severe rebuke:

Out of My way, satan! You are blocking

My path! You want to have things not God's way, but man's!

So too when the mother of Sts. James and John put in her petition for first honors for her two sons in the kingdom of the Master, he said:

You do not know what you are asking.

On rare occasions He would tease them playfully, as when He asked St. Philip before the multiplication of the loaves:

Where can we get bread enough to feed a crowd like this?

and St. John the Evangelist puts in a little aside here to let us know for certain that Our Lord was just having His little joke:

And this He said to try him

(or in our modern term, to *tease* him)

for He Himself knew what He was going to do.

With St. John the Baptist, however, it was quite different. Towards him Our Lord showed the man-to-man respect of almost an equal. It is not only that He chose him for His Precursor, submitted to him for "the baptism of John", and praised him highly whenever He had the chance; the very manner of His dealing with him, the way He talked to him, reveal an unmistakable respect and admiration.

For instance, He called him "My angel" (I will send My angel . . .); He compared him with the great prophet Elias, or rather somehow identified him with Elias ("Elias has already come, and they did to him everything they wanted").

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The scene of Christ's baptism brings out this man-to-man respect very plainly. At first St. John had protested against administering his baptism to Our Lord:

I ought to be baptized by You,
and You come to me?

But Our Lord replied:

Let it be this way now.
It is one part of our task to do everything
the way we ought.

"We", "our": the comradely spirit is indeed unmistakable: Christ being baptized, John baptizing, they are working together, side by side in "doing everything the way they ought".

And St. John was great enough to give Our Lord the tribute of understanding what He meant:

Then John gave in to Him.

It would take too long to detail all the other instances of the greatness of this giant friend of Christ; the terms in which Christ sang his praises, and the way He was affected by the news of his death, seeking out a "quiet place" like any friend grieved by the death of a friend; the manner in which St. John swayed and won the crowds despite the fact that he never worked a miracle and never claimed miraculous powers; and how his fearless courage won him a martyr's crown. It all sums up to the same thing: he was a spiritual giant no matter how we view him; and the only surprising thing about it, once we have given the matter a little thought, is that in the English speaking countries, at least since the Protestant reformation, this outstanding friend of Jesus Christ and giant pillar of the Church seems to have lost the standing

in popular esteem that was his for centuries in the Christian era, and still is his today in the Latin countries of Christendom.

All this greatness, however, is but background, so to speak, for the paradoxical fact of his extraordinary poverty.

This giant, this confidant of Christ, lived a life of almost complete destitution; poorer than St. Francis of Assisi, poorer than the wandering St. Benedict Joseph Labre, poorer even than Jesus Christ Himself.

While Our Lord was spending His hidden years at Nazareth with Our Lady and St. Joseph, St. John the Baptist was already leading his life of poverty in the desert. For he did not wait until it was time to begin his preaching before he retired to the desert; the Evangelist St. Luke says, immediately after relating the wonders that accompanied his birth and circumcision:

The child grew and was strengthened in spirit and he was in the deserts until the day of his manifestation to Israel.

At Nazareth Our divine Lord had at least a home and a family circle, however scanty the material comforts it provided; but St. John did not have even that. Later on, during His public life, Our Lord would be able to say of Himself:

The Son of Man hath not whereon to lay
His head;

but St. John could have said it of himself for practically all of his life.

As for clothing, St. John

was clothed in a garment of camel's hair,
and had a girdle of leather about his loins;

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and for food

he ate locusts and wild honey.

None of the refinements of civilization here, but just the primitive essentials: whatever was handy in the desert to put on and wear for a covering (and that garment of camel's hair, incidentally, must have served as a hair shirt par excellence); and the diet of a starving man lost in the desert for food.

And it was God's holy will that His "angel", the very greatest of all the prophets, should lead this lost and abandoned kind of life for a quarter of a century!

The enemies of Christ were not slow to discern the difference between His way of life and St. John's, and made it a matter of reproach or captious objection:

Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast often; but yours do not fast?

Our Lord replied:

Can the wedding guests fast as long as the bridegroom is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; they will fast when that time comes.

He answered the objection against Himself; but at the same time He did not deny that St. John was having it harder, at least as far as fasting was concerned, than He Himself.

Such was St. John's life: the poorest of the poor. And when it came to his death, there was the humiliation of weakness and poverty too.

His arrest by Herod in the first place seems to have been due to some kind

of treachery and plotting. Both St. Matthew and St. Mark say that he was "delivered up" to Herod. Then he was kept in jail like a malefactor, even while Herod's secret reverence for him was paying tribute to his innocence. And he was slain to satisfy a woman's spite, as the reward for an obscene dance. What a list of tragic trivialities to serve as the agents of death for any man; and how many poor unknown creatures through history have come to their end through similar sordid circumstances!

But could not the good Lord, we can hardly help wondering, have made some kind of exception in the case of His great Precursor? Could he not have made his death easier, and his whole life too, for that matter?

By all means the good Lord could have arranged things in such a way as to provide a sweet and easy life for his great friend, St. John the Baptist. He freely chose, however, to do things differently; at every moment of the Baptist's life He was holding out to him the gift of "holy poverty", as something eminently worthy of so great a man. St. John did not refuse the gift, but took it gladly, and hugged it to his heart until his dying day. And far from taking anything away from his nobility, it was poverty that helped to make him great; it was his poverty that Christ boasted about (if "boasted" can be said of our divine Lord) when citing St. John's greatness to the Jews:

Did you go out to see a man wearing elegant clothes? No; the people wearing elegant clothes are living in the king's house.

Amen I say to you, among those born of woman there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist.



Test of Character

L. M. Merrill

The "Martyr" Complex

It is an axiom that no one can go through life without suffering. That is because life is a trial, not a meaningless trial, but a time when each man must be tested for fitness to enter heaven, where there will be no more suffering. Sufferings on earth may be of the body, through illness, discomfort, privation, etc.; or of the mind, through worry and anxiety in various forms; or of the heart, through the hurts and slights received from others and the misfortunes that love may be made to experience.

The normal person with a solid character accepts his or her share of suffering in life without undue manifestations of self-pity or grief. But in the midst of suffering humanity there are individuals who stand out as examples of weakness because of the "martyr-complex" they have adopted. They are constantly heard talking about their terrible troubles. They are convinced that nobody ever had to suffer as they must suffer. Even their external demeanor becomes one of fixed sadness, revealing an uninterrupted consciousness of the bitterness of their life.

It is not strictly correct to apply the designation of "martyr" to such people. Or rather, the word is used of them in an ironic sense. True martyrs are very cheerful people. They suffer death or mistreatment for the love of God or in defense of some virtue, and, like St. Peter, they rejoice to have something to suffer to prove their friendship with God.

Persons who are afflicted with the "martyr-complex" are not inspired by the love of God. Nor are they asked to suffer much more than the average Christian. They are looking for pity for themselves, and because busy people do not have time to be constantly pitying them, they constantly pity themselves. And they show it by word, action and appearance.

The perpetually complaining wife, the sad-eyed, weepy, querulous mother, even the everlastingly moaning shut-in, should throw off their "martyr-complex" by beginning to love God and "to rejoice that they have something to suffer for Him." They should make cheerfulness, both in word and appearance, their most needed virtue and work for it till it is attained.

Voice From The Vatican

What Popes have said on topics of interest to the people of all times.

F. B. Bockwinkel

THE EARLY followers of Christ, zealous keepers of His word and doers of His will, astounded the pagan world by their behavior. These Christians loved. These Christians worshipped. These Christians sacrificed and suffered. These Christians were happy.

To a nervous and almost exhausted world, to modern followers of Christ, the Vicars of Christ and their ambassadors have given an invitation to capture the spirit of their devout predecessors. The love, the worship, the sacrifice and suffering, the happiness which was theirs in the early centuries, can be ours in the twentieth century provided we keep His word and do His will.

The present Pope, Pius XII, on the occasion of His Silver Episcopal jubilee, gives the spiritual profile of this primitive Christianity by pointing out four unmistakable characteristics: 1) unshakable confidence in victory based on a profound faith; 2) serene and unlimited readiness for sacrifice and sufferings; 3) Eucharistic fervor and recollection arising from the deep conviction of the social efficacy of Eucharistic thought on all forms of social life; 4) a striving after an ever closer and more enduring unity of spirit and of hierarchy.

Says Pope Pius XII, in the address given May 13, 1942: "The confidence in victory of the primitive Church drew its life, soundness and imperturbability from the words of the Master: 'I have overcome the world.' They are words which might well have been inscribed on the wood of His cross, the standard of His victories.

"Let the Christianity of today be

penetrated and inflamed by the burning and luminous fire of that watchword and you will feel in your hearts the peaceful, quiet confidence of victory that reassures you with the passing of these dark days in which so many are living in terror and discouragement. There will come not the terrors which the small-minded dread, but the brilliant fulfilment of the hopes of the faithful and magnanimous souls.

"In a sense, the return of the Church to her beginnings is in our day a stern but inspiring reality. As at the outset and more than in many other ages, the divine foundation of Christ, though never wavering before her enemies, is struggling in more than one place today for its existence. Combative atheism, systematic anti-Christianity, cold indifference, make war on it, making use of conceptions and thoughts which have nothing in common with the friendly usages of polite controversy, but frequently descending to the crudity of violence.

"Nor is there any other explanation why today, too, practical faith in the Son of God, submission to His law, spiritual union with His Church, and loyalty to His representatives on earth, have meant in some places a continual succession of mistrust and abuse, of degradation and disabilities, of personal and social discredit, of shortened means and hard circumstances, of poverty and sufferings, of misery and handicaps and injury, corporal as well as spiritual.

"In such an atmosphere of terror and danger what remains, beloved sons, in our time but the imperative

need to refashion ourselves on the model of the early Church and on the magnificent example given by those Christians, on their burning faith, on their dauntless spirit, on their conscious assurance of victory; to drink in, as from a pure spring of courage and salvation, a new strength, a new drive, a new constancy, as we reflect that all that they believed in, hoped for, loved, prayed for, worked for, suffered for and gloriously won is also our life, our glory, and the incorruptible treasure of the Church."

About the second characteristic of the early Church, Pius XII remarks: "If the seal of blood which beautified the Church's youth through the centuries of trial, suffering and sacrifice appear to us now as the brightest stone in her triumphal diadem, so, too, for Christendom of today, the greatness of her future victory, won in the fire of terrible tribulation, will correspond to the generosity of her sacrifice.

"The stout, determined will of those heroes who went before us with the standard of faith could not be broken by Nero's or Diocletian's fury, or the insidious cunning of a Julian the Apostate. Calm and ready without counting the cost, in the face of every kind of torture and martyrdom they did not tremble or waver before outrage piled on outrage, blow on blow, before the violence or snares of the enemies of Christ.

"A Christianity that has ever before its eyes the heroism of the first centuries can never fail to be true to the spirit of those words written by Peter while persecution raged: 'But even if you suffer anything for justice's sake, blessed are you.' It will show itself worthy of the inheritance of its forefathers and deeply conscious of its exalted mission, will secure in the hour prepared by God — through suffering

indeed, but glorious suffering — a peace which will make it exclaim with the Apostle of the Gentiles: 'Thanks be to God Who has given us the victory.'"

Pope Pius XII next appeals for imitation of the early Christians in their devotion to the Eucharist. "But whence did the courageous faith of the first Christians derive its life and its enthusiasm? From the Eucharistic union with Christ, Who is the inspiration of moral conduct that is pure and pleasing to God, at the table of the bread of the strong. They felt enkindled in their hearts a zeal which gave and increased energy and peace. They felt themselves brothers and sisters of Christ. Nourished by the same Food and the same Drink, united in fraternal union by one same love, one same un-failing hope, welded together by a mystic bond that makes of thousands of hearts and thousands of souls one great family, with but one heart and one soul, on the altar under the veil of bread and wine, there was present to them the God of their souls and of victories, Who would raise aloft His standards in the place of the Roman Eagles for the conquest of the world — a world of which Rome would be the center not through force, but through her faith.

"The Church today, with joy and affection, clasps the hand of the primitive Church. Across the centuries, the goodness and winsomeness of Christ living among us never fail. And if He has opened up the fountains of the beneficent, generous Eucharistic stream through the inspired action of the great Pope Pius X in the same measure in which they flowed in the early centuries, it was because He took cognizance of the fact that the times in which we live demand from us no less staunch faith, no less pure morality, no less

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ardent charity, and a readiness to sacrifice not unlike that which made the early age of the Church great and wonderful."

The last characteristic of the early Church, the Holy Father describes in these words: "Not least wonderful or great was the enthusiasm of the young spouse of Christ for the preservation, order and consolidation of unbreakable unity to join faithful and hierarchy today, when the separation of so many brethren from the See of Peter has reached such tragic consequences, harming all Christendom and weakening the efficacy of their activity in the world.

"Whilst the vital union between pastor and flock in the Catholic world extends and renders ever more evident its beneficent effects, the prayer that all may be one rises with ever more vehemence from the hearts of those who believe in Christ, and many others, who, though living outside the visible Church, in all sincerity and eagerness join in that prayer because they feel that in a world hostile to Christ the very existence of Christianity is at stake.

"When we think back to the early Church, sole and spotless mother of all churches, where better, we ask, might the prayer 'that they may be one' re-echo in more ringing tones than from this rock beside the Tiber on which heaven's favor has shown more bright-

ly and generously, once Providence had selected it to be the Episcopal See of the first Peter and the spiritual bastion of Christianity; on that riverbank whose annals, on one of their brightest pages, recount the glorious martyrdom of the Prince of the Apostles and the high privilege of having given to his mortal remains their last resting place?

"On this day, from this holy place, spiritual center of the Christian world — yes, in these our days, when the Spouse of Christ must in various parts endure stubborn conflicts and her faithful sons must support many inconveniences for their open profession of Christianity and their loyalty for the Church — it is for Us, beloved children, a very special and unwonted pleasure to be able to announce to you and to let you hear that deep appealing cry which, from out the shadows that surround the tomb of Peter, breaks as an appeal from Christianity of the past to Christianity of the present and joins its renascent, persuasive force to Our voice in provident harmony.

"Let us rekindle in ourselves the spirit of love; let us hold ourselves ready to collaborate with our faith and our hands, after the most extensive, disastrous and bloody cataclysm of all history, to reconstruct from the pile of material and moral ruins a world which the bonds of brotherly love will weld in peace."

Builders All

"Your task: to build a better world,"
God said. I answered "How?"
This world is such a large, vast place,
So complicated now,
And I so small and useless am,
There's nothing I can do."
And God in all His wisdom said:
"Just build a better you."

Dorothy Jones in *Christian Advocate*



For Wives and Husbands Only

D. F. Miller

Ignored by a Father-in-Law

Problem: When my husband and I were engaged, his parents bitterly resented the idea of our getting married. Because of this we were married without telling them about it, knowing that they would not agree to it anyway. The priest who married us approved our plan on the ground that their objections were unreasonable. We have been married less than seven years and are expecting our fifth baby. We lead ordinary Catholic lives as faithfully as we can. Our great sorrow is the fact that my father-in-law refuses to speak to me and ignores our children. We cannot understand this because my husband and I both come from large, well-educated, Catholic families, with the same background, etc. Frankly, I bitterly resent such unfair treatment. Please suggest something that I can do.

Solution: It is possible that only God can determine what is the motive behind your father-in-law's un-Christian and unfatherly behavior, and only God can judge the extent of his deliberately incurred guilt. Objectively, he is doing a great wrong. He is persisting in a habit of sin by ignoring his son's wife and his own grandchildren. As the years have gone by, pride has probably intensified his hardness of heart, making it increasingly difficult for him to admit that he has been doing wrong.

All this is said to assure you that you have not done wrong, except in so far as you may have shown your resentment and thus made your father-in-law feel that you did not want his kindness. Remember that you are bound to forgive, and to show that forgiveness in a readiness to be friendly at all times. In fact, it would be well to go out of your way to show kindness to him, even with no expectation that you will be rewarded by a sudden change of heart on his part. After all, he needs your sympathy and kindness. He is offending God, and is also probably very miserable in a human way too. Accept the heartache his conduct causes as a cross that Our Lord permits for your good, and imitate Him by saying often, "Father forgive him."

Happenings In Rome

Monthly round-up of significant events in the capital of Christendom.

C. D. McEnniry

ROME IS celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the holy death of Cardinal Archbishop Ledochowski. Born of a noble Polish family in 1822, he must have had a good Catholic home, for two of his sisters are proposed for beatification, Theresa, foundress of the Sodality of St. Peter Claver, and Ursula foundress of the Ursuline Sisters of the Precious Blood. After the death of his mother, his father became a priest and finally Superior General of the Jesuits.

After carrying out various important diplomatic missions for the Vatican in various countries, he was created Archbishop of Gnesen and Posen, then under the dominion of Prussia. The tin god, Bismarck, began his persecution of the Church. He called it a "Battle for High Culture" (*Kulturkampf*). He drove out the Redemptorists, Christian Brothers, Franciscans, Trappists, Madams of the Sacred Heart. (In the Providence of God, the novice master of this columnist was one of those exiled Redemptorists, the unforgettable Father Adam Herz.) Next Bismarck closed Catholic Schools and minor seminaries, then told the priests what kind of sermons they were to preach, or else go to jail.

There was one man who defied all the iron laws of the "Iron Chancellor". That man was Archbishop Ledochowski. Bismarck threatened him, fined him, confiscated his goods, cut off his salary, reduced him to living quarters of two small rooms, finally jailed him. A small army of soldiers and police came to make the arrest, for they feared what the people might do to defend this deeply loved prelate. The

Pope defied Bismarck by making Ledochowski a Cardinal. He was then expelled from his homeland. His journey and his entry into Rome were like those of a conquering hero — for such he was. To the bitter chagrin of Bismarck, he continued to rule his Archdiocese of Gnesen and Posen from Rome. The Pope made him head of the important Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. One morning this tireless worker rose as usual at five o'clock, and dropped dead. He willed his body to an exile's grave and his heart to the Cathedral of Gnesen and Posen. Bismarck's proud dream of domination had been dissipated into thin air. Cardinal Archbishop Ledochowski is still the beloved hero of his fatherland and a source of hope and courage to his fellow-countrymen in a persecution more savage than that of Bismarck.

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The railroaders came to see the Pope. He said: "While I was saying Mass this morning I asked God to tell me what to say to you. When I opened the Missal and saw the Epistle for the Mass of today, I knew what I should say: 'Dearly beloved, hold fast to brotherly union in prayer.'" This is something neither the labor leaders nor the industrialists urge when they harangue the railroaders. But what glorious results the railroaders would achieve if they would heed it. "Dearly beloved, hold fast to brotherly union in prayer."

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"Happy birthday to you!" When Holy Mother Church gives this glad

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greeting to her child, she does not mean the day on which the child was born into this valley of tears, stained with the guilt of original sin, but rather the happy day on which her child was freed from exile and welcomed to the endless joys of the heavenly fatherland. That is the day the Church calls "dies natalis — birthday" of her saints.

St. Maria Goretti just had her fiftieth birthday — the fiftieth anniversary of her glorious death in defense of maidenly purity. It was the occasion for a visit home. They carried her body in royal procession from the church where she is buried to the old stone hut in the swamps near the Anzio beach-head, where, fifty years ago, she lay bleeding from fourteen knife thrusts, praying God to forgive and convert the man who had tried to make her sin.

All day long, by train, by car, in country carts, on foot, the people came — tens of thousands of them — to honor this heroine, and to beg for moral strength through the powerful intercession of the modern martyr of purity.

"*Felix Roma* — Jubilant Rome" celebrates yearly, with indescribable pomp, the feast of the two great apostles who purpled with their blood the soil of Rome and left to Rome their treasured bones. But none ever loved the brethren with deeper love than Peter and Paul, and so, within the octave of their feast, Rome celebrates all the fellow-martyrs of the two apostles.

This year, as always, the procession circled the Circus of Nero, where St. Peter was crucified, and terminated in the venerable "Campo Santo Tedesco — German Burying Ground."

The preacher, Father Vinci of the Dominicans, repeated the battle cry that had been heard for the first time from the lips of these martyrs in the Circus of Nero, which has been repeated down the ages, which even today springs from the lips of the courageous victims behind the Iron Curtain: "*Christus vincit! Christus regnat! Christus imperat!* Christ triumphs! Christ reigns! Christ rules!"

Today, as in all previous ages of her existence, the Catholic Church is the fervent patron of art. But it must be true art. The Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office has issued an instruction warning against the construction or ornamentation of sacred buildings in any way that is grotesque or offensive to piety, modesty, good taste or solid traditions. In choosing the members of the "Commission of Sacred Art" who are to pass upon the correctness of these things, the bishops are to choose men who, besides an artistic sense and professional expertness, know how to express in their work that sincere faith and solid piety which is the end of sacred art. Furthermore the candidates for the priesthood are to be taught the venerable traditions and the clear directives of the Holy See regarding sacred art.

Advice on Models

From the *Milwaukee Journal* comes this pointed little story related of the original Henry Ford.

At the celebration of the automobile magnate's golden wedding anniversary, he was asked by a reporter:

"To what do you attribute your successful marriage?"

"Same secret as that of a successful car," Mr. Ford replied. "Stick to the same model."



Thoughts for the Shut-in

L. F. Hyland

The Goodness of Pain

There is no absolute goodness in pain. In itself, apart from its relation to anything else, pain is contrary to the innate desire or appetite for health and well being that God incorporated in the nature of man. In itself it is a deprivation of a good, an absence of the good order that should abide in the various parts and powers of the nature of man. In itself and for its own sake, pain is contrary to God's will, who made nothing bad and wants all things He made to remain good and sound.

Pain can be considered good only in its relation to other things. Pain is good in the measure that sin is bad. Sin is man's effort deliberately to disrupt God's purposes and plans. Pain is God's good way of letting man heal the disorder that he has brought into the world by sin. A torn garment has to be sewed together, sometimes laboriously by hand. Mending would never be necessary if garments never tore. The order of God's plan for the world is torn by sin and has to be mended by pain.

All men, as members of the same human family, share in the disorder created by their first parents' fateful and decisive sin. That is why all know pain at one time or another, even children who cannot yet understand these things. Most adults have added to the disorder in the world by their personal sins, and can directly view pain when it comes to them as the means of mending the torn garment, or of restoring the order their sins disrupted.

Pain is good because it is the instrument of hope. If there were no pain in the world while sin remained, there would be no hope; damnation would be every man's destiny. Christ's pain proved this, and every human headache, toothache, earache, backache, and any other kind of ache is now a reminder that sin can be repaired and is repaired by pain, and that heaven where there will be neither sin nor pain is yet attainable by all.



Sideglances

By the Bystander

An interesting form that anti-Catholic literature often takes is that of the "Reward Offered Pamphlet or Dodger." Good, no doubt sincere, Protestants are constantly sending us samples of this sort of thing. It is a tricky exercise in religious polemics. It offers large financial rewards to any Catholic who will prove that certain doctrines, which the pamphlets assume to be believed by Catholics, can be found in the Bible. Two such pamphlets are before us. One offers \$50,000 to any Roman Catholic who will produce a Scripture text to prove ten propositions supposedly held by Catholics. The other, considerably less generous from the financial angle, and considerably more demanding of contestants, offers only \$1,000 "to the first Catholic priest or layman who will prove that the following 100 Roman Catholic doctrines and practices are taught in the Bible." The idea behind such pamphlets is that the Bible and the Bible alone is the source of all religious knowledge and practice. One might counter and offer \$5,000 or \$50,000 reward to anyone who would prove from the Bible that the Bible is the sole source of knowledge of His religion given to the world by Christ. One could add another \$5,000 or \$50,000 reward to anyone who could prove that Christ did not say to His apostles, "He that heareth you, heareth me," or "Going, therefore, teach all nations." Christ told some men to teach other men; He never said anywhere that the Bible alone would teach all.

But there is another point about such pamphlets that should make them untrustworthy for thinking people. It is easy to make up almost anything as a teaching of Catholics and then to offer them a reward

for proving it is in the Bible. Or, vice versa, it is easy to take something that is in the Bible and then to offer a reward to Catholics if they can prove it is not there. An instance of this latter may be found in the pamphlet with ten propositions that Catholics are challenged to prove. One of the offers reads: "Five thousand dollars reward to any Catholic who shall produce a text to prove that Peter had no wife." The implication is that Catholics have been going around the world saying that Peter was unmarried. In view of the fact that three different evangelists, Sts. Matthew, Mark and Luke, all speak about Peter's wife, and that all ancient and modern, Catholic and Protestant copies of the Bible have these texts intact, it is amusing (if not stultifying) to be offered \$5,000 reward for proving that the Bible says that Peter had no wife. Is not something else proved instead, viz., namely, that the writer of the tract wanted to make ignorant people believe that Catholics are wont to deny a fact that is clearly stated in the Bible?

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The question of celibacy, no doubt on the writer's mind when he offered to reward anyone who would prove that Peter had no wife, draws another \$5,000 reward offer. This amount is set aside "for any Roman Catholic who shall produce a text (of the Bible) to prove that priests ought not to marry." Of course no Catholic ever held that the Bible forbids priests to marry. If the Bible, which records the instructions of Christ and His apostles to the first Christians, contained a prohibition against a married clergy, there would have been few apostles or priests in the early Church, when candidates for the priest-

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hood had to be taken from the ranks of converts, most of whom were married. Even at that the apostles St. John and St. Paul were not married. And both Our Lord and St. Paul taught that not to marry is a great good if marriage is renounced for the love and service of God. St. Paul went so far as to say that to remain a virgin is better than to marry if one's purpose is to be concerned with the things of God. (See I Corinthians, 7-38). The Catholic Church accepts this as true because the Bible says so, and as soon as the Church had grown large enough to make it practical, she asked of those who wished to become priests to do the better thing spoken of by St. Paul and not to marry, so that they could the better serve God and souls.

Five thousand dollars are also offered "to any Roman Catholic who shall produce a text to prove that the Virgin Mary can save us." Again, we cannot claim the reward because no Roman Catholic, at any time or in any place, or in his right senses and with a basic knowledge of his faith, has ever maintained that the Virgin Mary can save anybody, in the sense of redeeming anybody or making a divine satisfaction for anybody. Only Christ could do that, and every Catholic realizes it. But we can and do claim the \$5,000 reward offered "to any Roman Catholic who shall produce one text of Holy Scripture proving that we ought to pray to the Virgin Mary." One text that proves this is Luke, 1-28, in which he records an archangel praying to Mary by saying to her: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee." This is a prayer of praise offered to Mary by an angel "sent from God," and surely men should follow the example of the angels whom God sent into the world. Most likely the author also had the Virgin Mary in mind when he offered \$5,000 "to any Roman Catholic who shall produce a text to prove that there are more mediators between God and men than one." Any Cath-

olic theological text-book, as indeed do the direct words of Our Lord and St. Paul in the Bible, makes it clear that there is only one mediator between God and men in the primary and absolute sense of the word. In a secondary sense, and after Christ has performed His essential mediation, others can through His merits pray for their friends. They "mediate by prayer," but there is still only one mediator, Jesus Christ, Who could make it possible or fruitful for them to pray.

Three of the \$5,000 reward offers deal with Peter's position, the authority of the Pope, and the age of the Church. One of them challenges Catholics to prove that Peter was Bishop of Rome; the second that the Pope is the Vicar of Christ or the successor of St. Peter; the third that the Church of Rome is the oldest Church. Despite the fact that reputable modern historians, Catholic, Protestant and pagan, are practically unanimous in stating that abundant evidence proves that Peter ruled the Church from Rome in his last years and died there, some tract-writers still think that the easiest way to discredit the authority of the Church and the Popes is to state that St. Peter was never in Rome. Their only argument is that the Bible nowhere says in so many words: "Peter was in Rome." As to whether the Pope is or is not the successor of St. Peter, no single text can be found in the Bible stating that "Pope Pius XII is the successor of St. Peter." But the whole New Testament reveals that Christ did hand down His powers to successors to the end of time. And asking for a text of the Bible, written 1900 years ago, to prove that the Roman Catholic Church of 1952 is the oldest Church is like asking that we prove from the Bible the fact of electricity or radio. The Bible actually proved, in the time it was written, that the Church of Christ was the youngest Church in the world. It did promise that that Church would never

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be destroyed.

We doubt that anyone will ever lay claim to the rewards offered in this and similar tracts, and we doubt that they would be paid if they were claimed. But the tracts do accomplish the purpose their authors have in mind. They cleverly insinuate that Catholics hold foolish and fictitious doctrines; or they correctly state doctrines that Catholics accept for historical or logical reasons, and then pooh-pooh these doctrines because the Bible does not explicitly state them; or they affirm doctrines that Catholics find proven by

fairly explicit words of the Bible, and then deny that the Bible texts mean what they say. Thus they confuse the ignorant, who do not recognize the basic error of all such pamphlets, viz., that those who write them would have no Bible to fall back on if the Church they scorn had not officially and authoritatively declared what the true Bible is. Thus a Catholic can offer \$50,000,000 reward to anyone who can prove that anybody would know what the Bible is if the Catholic Church had not, by an act of her supreme authority received from Christ, decided once and for all what is the Bible.

Semper Fidelis

Although Marine Officer Gene F. Diamond admits that none of the canonized saints of the Church have been Marines, he advises the men of the corps to turn the stumbling blocks in their lives into stepping stones on the road to sanctity: Here is the advice, as printed in his religious bulletin:

Are you tired of your dull life?

St. Felix started out as a hermit, but God saw fit to call him out of his solitary surroundings to an active life.

If you are not satisfied with your dull life and God is, why worry? It won't be long.

Do your horses run out of the money?

St. Camillus was a gambling man and bet on almost everything that moved. He had sense enough to reform and be converted before he ran out of cash.

Most Marines don't, but should.

Does your platoon leader think you are stupid?

St. Thomas Aquinas, one of the greatest of philosophical minds, was known by some of his associates as "The Dumb Ox."

Are you broke most of the time?

St. Cosmas was known as the "Moneyless One"—and this was a permanent assignment.

We, at least, have cash two days a month.

Do you do a slow burn most of the time because you dislike your superiors?

St. Lawrence did a slow burn, too; they toasted him on a gridiron over an open fire, without benefit of asbestos dungarees.

Cool yourself off by offering the whole thing up to God.

—Josephinum

No Publicity

Penance is the only sacrament for which lights are not used, and the only sacrament that the priest administers seated. Also the only one at which (thanks be to God) no third party assists.

—Holy Roodlets



Catholic Anecdotes

Tidying Up

It is related that a Catholic took a Protestant friend who was visiting him for a walk in the country, and in a friendly way they argued about religion.

"And then, you believe in purgatory," said the Protestant. "If I'm saved, I'm saved. Why shouldn't I go straight to heaven?"

When they returned from their walk they were told that dinner was just being served.

"Fine," said the Protestant, "I never felt so hungry in my life!"

"Splendid, come straight into the dining room."

"What, just as I am? With these muddy boots and dirty hands and a collar like a wet rag? I wouldn't insult your wife that way. Let us go and tidy up first."

Later at the table the Catholic said to his wife:

"You ought to be very flattered. Our friend here pays more attention to what you think of him than to what his Creator thinks."

"Whatever do you mean?" she asked.

"He would not come in to dinner without washing and changing, but he hopes to go straight into heaven with all the dust and stains of this life still on his soul."

"I never looked at it that way," said the Protestant. "Yes, after all, perhaps the souls of the departed would choose not to enter heaven till they are fit, however painful the waiting might be. The contrast between God's holiness and their own unworthiness would be too great."

Point of Contact

Pope Pius IX made many converts. It was a gift from God and few could resist the charm of his words. In the year 1860, two Frenchmen and a lad whom they knew to be an unbeliever, met at a hotel in Rome. They had an audience with the Pope and persuaded the boy to accompany them by saying:

"Come along with us, if for no other reason than curiosity. You will not want to return home and say that you were in Rome and didn't see the Pope."

The unbeliever finally consented, and with a large number of pilgrims filed in line for an audience with His Holiness. As was customary, the Holy Father asked them if they had any requests to make, or any religious articles to be blessed. During this time the youth stood at one side assuming an indifferent attitude. Pope Pius noticed this, stepped forward a bit and said:

"My son, have you nothing to ask of me?"

"No."

"Nothing, really nothing, son?"

"No."

"My son, is your father living?"

"Yes, he is."

"And your mother?"

"My mother is dead."

"My child, since you have nothing to ask of me, let me make a request of you. Do me the favor, please, to kneel down here with me, and say one 'Our Father' and one 'Hail Mary' for the soul of your mother."

The Holy Father knelt down and the youth automatically did the same but when he arose he was a different man. God's grace had touched him.



Pointed Paragraphs

Gregorian Masses

The popularity of having Gregorian Masses said for one's dead has grown in recent years. However, not too many people are familiar with the origin of the practice. They know that Gregorian Masses consist of a Mass each day for thirty days without interruption, and that this is considered a powerful means of effecting a soul's deliverance from purgatory.

The practice is named after St. Gregory the Great who was Pope in the years 590 to 604. In his "Dialogues," he tells that he had thirty Masses said on thirty consecutive days for the repose of the soul of his friend Justus, a monk who had died in Rome.

At the end of the thirtieth Mass, says Pope St. Gregory, Justus appeared to his brother Copiosus, a physician who had assisted him in his last illness, and announced to him that through the Masses he had been delivered from purgatory. It is also recorded that Pope St. Gregory himself was assured from heaven of the deliverance of Justus.

St. Gregory was not the first to make use of the practice, nor the first to speak of its efficacy. It had become a pious custom before his time. But because of his holiness, and the clarity of his testimony concerning its efficacy, and his zeal in promoting it, the thirty consecutive Masses offered for a deceased person were named after him and called Gregorian Masses.

The custom flourished throughout Europe, and some religious orders decree in their constitutions that the Gregorian Masses be said for each deceased member. Pope Benedict XIII

extolled the pious practice for the faithful.

It should be remarked that the efficacy of the Gregorian Masses is based on private revelations, which do not have to be believed as a matter of faith. Yet the long and honored history of the practice within the Church, as well as the testimony of Pope St. Gregory, make it acceptable and appealing to most Catholics.

In the practical order, Catholics should not be surprised that it is often difficult if not impossible for their parish priests to fulfill the obligation of celebrating the Gregorian Masses. To bind themselves to say thirty consecutive Masses for one person (Gregorian Masses can be said only for one deceased person) would make it impossible for them to fulfill suddenly arising obligations of saying Mass out of justice or charity for others.

Parish priests are glad, however, to forward stipends for Gregorian Masses to missionaries, or to the Propagation of the Faith Society, or to large religious orders by whom they can be taken care of. Or they can tell their parishioners to whom the Masses should be sent. The Propagation of the Faith Society is always glad to receive them, because there are missionaries in many parts of the world who have no Mass stipends except those sent from abroad.

Since the obligation of saying thirty consecutive Masses, once accepted, binds those who accepted it to a responsible and continuing obligation, Catholics who have the means to do so usually make an offering of more than

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the exact stipend for thirty Masses. To ask that thirty Masses be said at any time is one thing; to ask that they be said on consecutive days places a special burden on the priest who accepts the obligation.

But no one is bound to have Gregorian Masses said. Nor is this an appeal for such Masses. Nor should the people of any parish neglect to have Masses said by their own priests merely for the sake of having Gregorian Masses said elsewhere. This is merely an explanation of a pious and honored custom in the Church.

Felicitations to a New President

By the time, or about the time, this issue of THE LIGUORIAN reaches most of its readers, a new president of the United States will have been elected. Whichever of the two contending candidates will have been chosen, we ask our readers to join us in greeting him with the true Christian respect that is due to the holder of a high office, with sincere pledges of loyalty and cooperation, and with prayers for his own welfare and that of the nation he must help to guide.

We ourselves shall have voted for one of the two major candidates, either the winner or the loser. We shall have done so after having listened to or read most of their speeches, analyzed the platforms on which they ran, and pondered the comments and interpretations of wise men concerning the issues at stake. Our vote will have represented an opinion, as sound and objective as we could make it, as to which of the two men might be expected to do the best job for America.

Note that we say that our vote will represent "an opinion". We cannot be absolutely certain in this matter, and we doubt that anyone else can. There are too many good, honest, intelligent

men on both sides of the political fence to make it possible for any individual to be without fear that his own judgment might be wrong. There are too many human factors, in an election of this kind, that make it impossible for one to be absolutely certain of the correctness of his vote, unless he possessed a God-given knowledge of the future. A vote, therefore, represents an opinion, perhaps a very strong opinion, but it should leave full room in the mind for acquiescence to what may turn out to be the majority vote of others.

Whether the man we shall have voted for or his opponent will be the next president of the United States, we greet him with warmth and respect and prayer. May he and all of us forget whatever bitterness may have crept into the campaign, whatever unguarded and unkind words we may have spoken, and work together with a new president for the peace and welfare of all America.

Prods to Benevolence

The Golden Rule Foundation, which is dedicated to the task of keeping the public aware of the shortcomings of its gifts to important benevolent causes, has analyzed the personal income and expenditure figures of Americans for the year 1951.

The average income of all Americans in 1951 was 10 per cent greater than it was in 1950. The cost of living in 1951 advanced only 4.2 per cent over 1950. The total personal income of all Americans in 1951 was \$254,075,000,000.

Taxes took about \$29,000,000,000 away from them, and they themselves put into savings \$17,000,000,000 more. That left about \$208,000,000,000 which were used for personal expenditures. Out of this tremendous sum, less than two per cent (2 cents

out of each dollar) was given by Americans for religious, welfare and educational causes. The average contribution to all such causes was about 50 cents a week. That included donations to churches, schools, Red Cross, Missions, welfare activities, hospitals, cancer funds, etc.

To the low income groups 50 cents a week for benevolent causes may sound like and is a considerable sum. But it is sad that out of the billions earned by middle class and larger income groups, less than 2 per cent was parted with in a generous spirit of charity and religion.

Escape and Discontent

We came across some interesting magazine circulation figures the other day. They refer to the class of periodicals dedicated to the reading pleasure of dyed-in-the-wool movie fans. There are at least 25 of these magazines, of which 11 are said to dominate the world of fandom. These 11 claim 6 million buyers a month, and a readership of 25 million persons.

This represents quite a sizable section of our population, and it is interesting to speculate on the effect of this highly specialized type of reading on their outlook and habits. The fare offered by the film magazines is escapist in the truest sense of the word. Their stock in trade consists of articles on Hollywood's current "perfect romance," a movie queen's secrets of beauty, sex-appeal tests, etc., all of them complete with lush details and picture-spreads portraying the personification of ethereal beauty or rugged handsomeness, as the case may be.

It is pathetic to think of millions of women, perhaps plump rather than pretty, whose native beauty, carefully nurtured though it may be, still falls somewhat short of the ideal, spending

hours poring over these accounts. It is sad to think of them dwelling in this unhealthy world of the imagination, dreaming of what, if they are middle-aged, might have been, or, if they are young, what might be.

We call it an unhealthy world by design, because it is so far removed from reality. The articles themselves are for the most part ghost-written at the behest of a publicity-agent with an eye on the public rather than on the subject of the piece. The matters discussed, beauty, romance, glamour, etc., are for millions a kind of fool's gold. As for beauty and glamour, many, in the nature of things, can never possess them. And as for romance, either it does not materialize at all or else, having been fondly grasped, it does not of itself yield the final and lasting happiness its devotees had been led to expect.

The inevitable result is discontent and disillusionment.

Certainly some of the blame for the restlessness and maladjustment so common today can be traced back to the Great Illusion fostered by Hollywood and diligently channelled to the gullible public by the movie magazines.

The American Legion and Prayer

Worthy certainly of more than passing notice is the recently launched "Back to God — Go to Church" program of the American Legion.

If we were surprised to hear of such a program emanating from such a source, it was a joyful surprise, and we cheerfully apologize for having been inclined in the past to the common opinion that the chief function of the Legion seemed to be to tear the town apart on the occasion of its annual convention.

Here is the five-point program recommended by the national organiza-

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tion of the Legion:

1. Every family should have a daily period of common prayer.

2. Families should petition God's blessing at every meal.

3. Parents should encourage the personal prayerful devotion of their children by example.

4. A corollary of devout family living should be regular family attendance at church or synagogue.

5. Members of the American Legion should lead all Americans in turning to their clergymen for spiritual counsel.

In order to implement this program, posters are being distributed throughout the country pointing up the necessity of family prayer, and every individual Legion post is being urged to get behind the program in a practical way.

We go along with this whole-heartedly. We believe that if it is adopted and put into practice on a national scale, we won't have to worry any longer about our national security.

Mothers' Blessings

A little booklet was sent to us recently by Mrs. Franklin Myers of Hawley, Pennsylvania. This booklet is called *Blessings Before And After Child-birth*. It contains a blessing for expectant mothers, another for mother and child after the baby is born, and a prayer for consecrating a child to the Blessed Virgin.

The blessing that took our fancy was the first one — for expectant mothers. For many young wives the bearing of a baby is a frightening ordeal. This is due to the fact that God said that babies would be born in pain

and suffering as a result of the sin of Adam and Eve. Nobody likes pain even when the reward for the pain is an immortal soul clothed in one's own flesh and blood. It is also due to the fact that so many false things are said about childbirth by the pagans and the selfish Christians of our day. Wives are indoctrinated with fear long before their baby is born.

The blessing for expectant mothers should help to remove this fear and spiritualize the pain that the bringing forth of a baby demands. It reminds the expectant mother that it is not herself primarily but God who is molding the baby within her and fashioning it not only according to her image but also according to His own. To realize that God is so completely involved in the mysterious process of creation that is going on beneath her heart should fill her with happiness and humility.

The work of popularizing these blessings was done by Mrs. L. A. Weider of Rochester, N.Y., a mother of six children, one of whom was killed in action during the last war. So great was her zeal, and so numerous were the requests for the blessing from expectant mothers that it became a custom in her parish church for the priest to impart the blessings after Mass on one Sunday each month. Since then the practice has spread to many other churches.

Requests for the booklet containing the blessings can be sent to Mrs. Franklin J. Myers, 312 Wyoming Ave., Scranton 3, Pa. We urge mothers to secure the booklet and to use it faithfully.

Observing ants, who cooperate,
And wolves, who compete;
I conclude man's estate
Hath needs beyond meat.

W. E. Walsh



Liguoriana



EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ST. ALPHONSUS

Selected and Edited by J. Schaefer

VICTORIES OF THE MARTYRS

Nov. 18: Sts. Romanus and Barulas:

The martyrdom of St. Romanus is truly wonderful, and is narrated by oriental writers as well as by those of the western Church. A Syrian by birth, he was a descendant of noble and Christian parents. He applied himself to study early in life and his natural talents enabled him to make great progress. But his greatest progress was in the science of the saints, in the sanctity of his morals and in his zeal for religion.

When the persecution of Diocletian began, Romanus was already a deacon of the Church of Caesarea. In his zeal he went from house to house exhorting the Christians to endure courageously whatever trials the persecution might bring them. His bishop sent him to Antioch on urgent business in the year 303, and there he found that the Christian churches were being pulled down in obedience to an imperial edict. Though this afflicted the saint deeply, his grief became greater still when he beheld the lapse of many Christians who became terrified at the threats of the judges and offered the prescribed sacrifices. Inflamed with zeal and unmindful of his own danger, Romanus appeared before one such crowd of apostates and rebuked them: "Oh, brethren, what are you doing? Do you abandon the true God, your Creator and Redeemer, to sell yourselves to the devil, your enemy? Are you going to offer incense to gods of bronze, stone and wood and adore as gods those who during life were the most abandoned of men?" Speaking thus, Romanus prevented many from falling, confirmed

the constant in their faith, and gave courage to the weak, disposing them to brave all the persecutions of their enemies.

To ridicule the Christians and also to make an example of them, Asclepiades, the prefect of the pretorium, sent a group of soldiers to a church to offer upon a consecrated altar sacrifices to the idols. He instructed them that after this was done the church was to be leveled to the ground. Romanus, however, heard of his plan and opposed the sacrilegious attempt, exclaiming that if they wished to slay a victim he was ready to offer to God the sacrifice of his life. Informed of this, Asclepiades ordered Romanus to be arrested. Well-meaning friends advised Romanus to flee, but he refused to so do and surrendered himself to the soldiers. At the tribunal he confessed that he was a Christian and that he dissuaded the faithful from obeying the edict, terming it impious. "I clearly foresee," he continued, "that this my confession will result in terrible torments for me, but I hope to suffer them with patience for the love of my God, since I have committed no crime."

Since the saint was a nobleman, the prefect, who at first had commanded that he be stretched upon the rack and torn with irons, ordered him to be beaten with scourges tipped with lead. "We shall see," he exclaimed, "whether you shall speak so insolently during your tortures."

The holy martyr replied: "God would not be pleased were I to be insolent, but by the grace of Jesus Christ, I shall remain faithful, nor will I cease

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while life yet remains in me to publish His praises and to detest your superstitions."

True to his word, Romanus not only suffered the torture patiently, but with joy. This infuriated Asclepiades, and he encouraged the executioners to redouble their efforts. Seeing that this availed nothing, he began to speak of the glory of the Roman empire, attributing this to the gods, adding also that it was his duty to implore of them prosperity for the emperor and to take bloody vengeance on those who rebelled. Romanus answered that he could not invent a better prayer for the princes and soldiers than that they should all embrace the faith of Jesus Christ.

Infuriated beyond words at this exchange, Asclepiades ordered the martyr to be stretched upon the rack and his sides and breast to be torn with iron hooks until the bones and bowels should appear. When the saint continued to bear his tortures patiently and encouraged the bystanders to despise all temporal punishments, the prefect commanded that his mouth and cheeks be torn with the same irons. Romanus thanked him for this, however, exclaiming that he had thus opened more mouths to celebrate the praises of Christ. When the judge threatened to burn him alive for his obstinacy in preferring the novel doctrine of a crucified man to the ancient religion, Romanus took occasion to extol the glories of the cross. He explained the holy mysteries which it indicated and concluded by offering to give to Asclepiades irrefutable proof of them. "Let a child of tender years be brought forward," he said, "and let us learn from him whether it be better to follow a religion which teaches that there are many gods, or that which adores only one."

The prefect accepted the challenge

and a young child was brought before them. To him Romanus said: "Which is better, my child, to adore Jesus Christ or many gods?" The boy replied that the true God could be only one, and that it was a contradiction to adore many. Confused by this answer, the tyrant asked the child: "Who has taught you these things?" "My mother," replied the child, "and she in turn was taught by God." Asclepiades had the cruelty to have the child torn by force from his mother's embrace, scourged and beheaded. The Church celebrates the triumph of this infant martyr, named Barulas, who was baptized in his own blood, on Nov. 18th. The good mother, a Christian, herself carried him to the place of execution and without shedding a tear, kissed him, handed him to the executioner and asked him to remember her in heaven. She then held out her garment to receive his head, and this she brought home as a precious relic.

Instead of being moved by this miracle, as were all the bystanders, the inhuman Asclepiades became more enraged and cruel. He caused Romanus to be again put to the torture and the fragments of flesh which still remained on his body to be pulled off. The saint however, mocked his executioners, exclaiming that they did not know how to deprive him of life. Hearing this, the prefect said: "Since you are so desirous of ending your life, you shall soon be satisfied; fire shall quickly consume you to ashes."

The funeral pyre was prepared and while the executioners were tying the saint to the stake he told them that he knew that this sort of martyrdom was not destined for him and that another miracle would astonish them. And so it happened, for of a sudden it began to rain in such torrents that the executioners were unable to set fire to

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the pile, though it was covered with oil and pitch. This caused such a commotion among the people that a report of the fact was sent to the emperor. While they were awaiting his decision, the saint chided his executioners, exclaiming: "Where now is your fire?"

The emperor was, at first, inclined to free a man so evidently protected by heaven, but Asclepiades not only dissuaded him but even obtained an order that Romanus should lose the tongue with which he had so blasphemed the gods. He, therefore, proceeded to the forum, summoned Romanus, and ordered a surgeon to pull out his tongue. A torrent of blood, covering the saint's beard and breast, followed the execution of this horrible sentence. It was a new miracle that Romanus could survive these barbarous torments, but it was a still greater miracle that the saint continued to speak. Eusebius, the historian, relates that in his time there were many persons yet alive who had witnessed this miracle.

Not content with what he had already done, Asclepiades made another attempt upon the saint's constancy. He ordered an altar, with fire, incense, and the flesh of animals to be prepared. He then brought Romanus forward, ordered him to sacrifice, and derided him,

saying: "I now give you leave to speak." The saint, however, to the amazement of all, replied that he should not be surprised if words were never wanting to those who preached Jesus Christ, for the laws of nature are subject to Him, and He could, therefore, enable him to speak without a tongue. Not knowing what to say to this new prodigy the tyrant suspected that he had been deceived by the physician and instantly demanded an investigation. And behold the mouth of the saint was found to be without a tongue! This miracle was further attested by an experiment upon a criminal who had been condemned to death. His tongue was cut out in the same manner, and he instantly expired.

Brought back to prison, St. Romanus remained there for some months. During this time he did not cease to preach the glories of Jesus Christ with even greater energy and clarity than before. Upon the celebration of Diocletian's birthday all the prisoners were set at liberty except Romanus, who was kept in prison with his legs in the stocks. He was finally strangled on Nov. 17th in the year 303. Thus did he go to heaven to receive the reward of all his sufferings.

The Living and the Dead

Francois Mauriac, on his visit to Oxford for his honorary degree, was immensely impressed, as a Catholic must be, with the religious tragedy preserved in the place built by and for Catholics.

As related in the *London Tablet*, he was standing in one of the medieval chapels, looking at the wall, when the Anglican pastor spoke to him.

"I was thinking," said Mauriac, "how in Catholic times that wall would have had a fresco on it."

"Oh," said the other, "we are going to put a text here, from Holy Scripture."

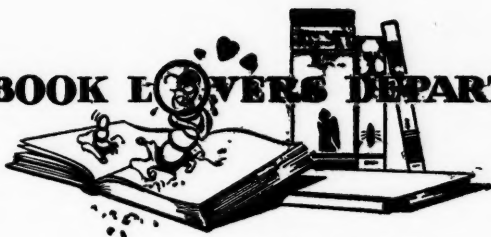
"What will it be?" said Mauriac.

"The words of Mary Magdalen."

When asked what words, the other replied:

"They have taken away my Lord; and I know not where they have laid him."

BOOK LOVERS DEPARTMENT



Conducted by T. Tobin

CATHOLIC AUTHOR OF THE MONTH

Rev. Robert E. Brennan, O.P. 1897-

Psychologist

I. Life:

Robert Edward Brennan, the son of Edward and Bridget O'Brien Brennan, was born in Lima, Ohio, on July the 29th, 1897. His entire education was received in Catholic schools: St. Mary's grade and high school, Lima, Ohio, St. Charles' College, Maryland, and Mt. St. Mary's Seminary, Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1918 he joined the Dominican Order and continued his studies at the Dominican seminary in Springfield, Ky., and at the Catholic University. The same year, 1925, that he was ordained to the priesthood he obtained the doctorate in philosophy from Catholic University. After ordination Father Brennan was sent to the Chinese missions where he became prefect of studies in the Dominican schools. In 1931 a siege of malaria, complicated by sunstroke, caused his recall to the United States where he was assigned a position as professor of psychology at Providence College. The famed Thomistic Institute was established at the college by Father Brennan in 1937. From 1942 until 1946 he taught psychology at the University of Montreal. The degree of Master of Theology, the highest award in the Dominican Order was conferred on him in 1944. The years, 1946 and 1947, were spent in a survey of universities in Europe and the East. Since 1947 he has been professor of psy-

chology at St. Joseph's Priory, Somerset, Ohio.

II. Writings:

All of Father Brennan's books have been in the field of philosophy, especially psychology. His two early books, *General Psychology* and *Thomistic Psychology*, were pioneer works in the integration of scholastic psychology and modern experimental psychology. *History of Psychology* is a brief evaluation of the various schools from the Greeks to the moderns. Father Brennan was one of the collaborators in the book, *Essays in Thomism*, in which a group of scholars surveyed modern Thomistic thought.

III. The Book:

Most of the author's output has been textbooks for students, but his latest work, *Image of His Maker*, is a popular presentation of the nature of man, explaining the physical, emotional, intellectual and volitional life of man. In addition to this psychological material there are also sections on man's growth in virtue which culminates in the attainment of his full stature in the possession of God in Heaven. This is an excellent book for one who wishes to know more about himself.

NOVEMBER BOOK REVIEWS

SPIRITUAL BOOKS

The Morning Offering. By Thomas H. Moore, S.J. 162pp. New York, N. Y.: The Apostleship of Prayer. \$3.00.

The Eternal Shepherd. By Thomas H. Moore, S.J. 82pp. New York, N. Y.: The Apostleship of Prayer. \$2.00.

Lord Teach Us How to Pray. By Rev. Richard Graef, C.S.Sp. 193pp. New York, N. Y.: Pustet Co. \$3.00.

This is the Victory. By Mother Aloysi Kiener, S.N.D. 216pp. New York, N. Y.: Pustet Co. \$3.00.

Father Thomas H. Moore, the editor of the *Sacred Heart Messenger*, explains the history and the nature of the Apostleship of Prayer in the book, *The Morning Offering*. The theme of the author is the necessary missionary apostolate of every one who has received the sacrament of confirmation. The graphic expression of this mission of Catholics is worth reproducing. "The modern world has bitter need for a Christ they can see in the streets. . . . Christ has not left the world. He has only changed the manner of His presence, so that no time or place can isolate Him from any age or city. I might here be talking of the Blessed Sacrament, but, as a matter of fact, I am talking about the presence of Christ in Christians. The Magdalens, the sinners of the world will come to Him in the Blessed Sacrament as the sinful girl came to Him in the house of Simon, but not before they have met Him in the streets. They must see the goodness of Him in the members of his Mystical Body. Today, they must find Him in Christians or they will not find Him at all."

The pages of this book show the Christian how souls can be brought to Christ by the apostolate of prayer and suffering. This modern, well written book has a freshness that will appeal to all.

The Eternal Shepherd, the second book by Father Moore, is the first of a series of meditations on the life of Christ. These

reflections first appeared in the *Sacred Heart Messenger*, and are reprinted in handy form for those who have need of a small book of meditations. The big pre-occupation of the author is to bring Christ into vital contact with men and women of today. Father Thomas Moore is one of the better spiritual writers of today.

Prayer and work are the two cornerstones of the spirituality of the German Holy Ghost priest, Reverend Richard Graef. *Yes, Father*, his first book, traced a simple way in which holiness can be obtained through one's daily work; *Lord, Teach Us How to Pray* explains an easy way of maintaining contact with God through prayer. The central concern of the book is to promote growth in Christ. To achieve this purpose the author gives an introduction to prayer and meditation. Beginners in the way of prayer, and those who need new stimulation in their prayers will receive assistance from *Lord, Teach Us How to Pray*.

In these days of confusion and discouragement it is exhilarating to pick up the latest volume of Mother Aloysi Kiener, *This is the Victory*. These affective reflections portray the peace and mercy of Christ. Religious and lay people will both find consolation in the pages of this book.

CHINESE CONVERT

From Confucius to Christ. By Paul K. T. Sih. Preface by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. 231pp. New York, N. Y.: Sheed and Ward. \$3.00.

In these days when the mainland of China is under the control of the Communists and missionaries are being expelled and even martyred, it is consoling to read the apologia of another distinguished Chinese convert. It has been maintained that China will one day flourish as another Catholic Ireland, and these conversions plus the blood of many martyrs are indications that this day will arrive.

Dr. Paul K. T. Sih, a spiritual son of

The Liguorian

Dr. John C. Wu, has written the story of his journey *From Confucius to Christ*. One is struck by the manner in which the Chinese religious and ethical tradition has laid the natural groundwork for the superstructure of the faith. His childhood devotion to the Chinese goddess of mercy made it natural for him to turn to the Blessed Mother when he learned her place in the divine economy of salvation. What F. J. Sheed said of John Wu, "he is totally Catholic, totally Chinese and totally himself," can be applied to this disciple. His path led from Confucius, through Protestantism and the Oxford Groups, to the fullness of revelation in the Church of Christ.

This Chinese diplomat writes with the simplicity and humility that seems to characterize his countrymen. One of the best sections in the book is the chapter in which he describes how he was reading Wu's Chinese translation of the Psalms while his plane was desperately searching for a place to land away from a violent storm. While not as profound nor as lyrically beautiful as Wu's book, *From Confucius to Christ* is an interesting and inspiring spiritual autobiography.

APOLOGETICS

Evidence for Our Faith. By Rev. Joseph H. Cavanaugh, C.S.C. 340pp. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press. \$3.00.

This book is the product of many classes in Apologetics given at the University of Notre Dame by Father Cavanaugh, and is the latest volume in the excellent series of theology for the layman issued by the same university. The treatment is as thorough and scholarly, yet popular, as that of any book that has come to the attention of this reviewer. In fact it is the best book for

both class and individual use that has appeared in English. It begins with a discussion of the current status of the controversy between Catholics and Protestants and continues with the proofs of the existence of God and the classical arrangement of the arguments for the divinity of Christ and the Church. The intelligent Catholic and the inquiring non-Catholic will derive great profit from reading *Evidence for Our Faith*.

FOR THE YOUNG

Master of Mischief Makers. By Leo Charles Burkhard, 211pp. St. Meinrad, Ind.: The Grail. \$2.50.

Black Robed Samson. By Harold W. Sandberg. 75pp. St. Meinrad, Ind.: The Grail. \$1.50.

Master of Mischief Makers is the life story of St. John Baptist de la Salle, the founder of the Christian Brothers. Jacques, one of the first followers of the Saint, tells the story in the first person. This well told story presents a full account of the aristocratic priest who incurred the scorn of his equals by dedicating his life to the Christian education of the poor boys of France.

Black Robed Samson is a short narrative of the work of Father Peter de Smet, S.J., the apostle of the Indians. Because of his great physical prowess the young De Smet was called Samson by his companions. The author stresses the strength of the missionary in his conquest of physical hardships in the wilderness, and in his out-racing and outwrestling an Indian chieftain as a means of gaining acceptance in the tribe. This short book will appeal to the adventurous strain in all boys. As a minor observation, it seems that the author would have done better to follow the English spelling, Sampson, in the title and throughout the book.

GIVE THE LIGUORIAN TO YOUR FRIENDS FOR CHRISTMAS



Lucid Intervals

Hekimar was new in the store business. "Have you an account here, ma'am?" he asked.

"No," the lady replied, "but I would like to see the manager."

Hekimar led her into the manager's office and announced, "A no-account lady to see you, sir."

The Sunday-school class was composed of three-year-olds. The teacher asked: "Do any of you remember who St. Matthew was?" No answer.

"Well, does anyone remember who St. Mark was?" Still no answer.

"Surely some of you must remember who Peter was?"

The little faces were full of interest, but the room remained quiet. Finally a tiny voice came from the back of the room:

"I fink he was a wabbit!"

A Negro applied at a stable for the job as helper.

"I suppose you know everything about horses?"

"Oh, yas, suh. I been handlin' hawses all my life."

"Know how to feed 'em, keep 'em in condition, hitch up a rig an' all?"

"Yas suh ree bob!"

"I suppose you're familiar with mules?"

The Negro shook his head impressively. "Boss, I knows too much about mules to get familiar wid dem!"

A driver jammed on his brakes, hopped out of his car and ran back toward the man he had just knocked down.

"Did I hit you?" the motorist cried.

"Oh, no, no. Of course not. I just got down to see if you had any air in your tires."

An American soldier, standing outside Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, saw a magnificent wedding procession enter.

"Who's the bridegroom?" he asked a Frenchman standing next to him.

"*Je ne sais pas*," was the reply.

A few minutes later, the soldier inspected the interior of the cathedral himself, and saw a coffin being carried down the aisle.

"Whose funeral?" he demanded of an attendant.

"*Je ne sais pas*," said the attendant.

"Holy mackerel," exclaimed the soldier. "He certainly didn't last long."

Six-year-old Jane was trying to monopolize the conversation while there were guests present. Finally tiring of it, her mother turned to her and inquired: "Dear, why do you talk so much?"

Jane looked up innocently and replied: "Because I don't know any big words and I have to use lots and lots of little ones to make up for it."

The young man waited impatiently for the lady to finish with the drugstore telephone directory. After she had turned page after page he said, "Madame, can I help you find the number you want?"

"Oh, I don't want a number," she replied. "I'm looking for a pretty name for my baby."

Visiting the cave of Socrates, in Athens, I heard again the story of how his wife gave him a terrible tongue-lashing one day. He stood there unmoved. To impress her point, she threw a bucket of water on him. The old philosopher, standing there drenched, remarked, "After all the lightning and thunder, I expected a shower."

Motion Picture Guide

MORALLY UNOBJECTIONABLE FOR GENERAL PATRONAGE

Reviewed This Issue

Big Jim McLain
Willie and Joe Black at The
Front
Yankee Buccaneer

Previously Reviewed

African Treasure
Army Bound
Assignment in Paris
Atomic City, The
Barbed Wire
Because You're Mine
Black Hills Ambush
Bonzo Goes to College
Border Saddlemates
Carson City
Cripple Creek
David
Dead Man's Trail
Denver and Rio Grande, The
Duel at Silver Creek, The
Fearless Fagan
Feudin' Fools
Francis Goes to West Point
Gold Fever
Gunman, The
Has Anybody Seen My Gal
High Treason (British)
I Dream of Jeanie
Island Rescue
Ivanhoe
Ivory Hunter
Jour de Fete (French)
Jumping Jacks
Junction City
Jungle, The
Kathy's Love Affair (formerly
Courtneys, The) (reissue)
Kid From Broken Gun
Kisenga, Man of Africa
Lady in the Iron Mask
Last Train From Bombay

Lure of the Wilderness
Ma and Pa Kettle at the Fair
Man in the White Suit, The
Man from the Black Hills
Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima
Montana Territory
My Son John
Oklahoma Annie
One Minute to Zero
Pirate Submarine
Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder
Road Agent
Rough, Tough West
Sally and Saint Anne
Story of Will Rogers, The
Target, The
Tarzan's Savage Fury
Thundering Caravans
Wagon Team
Wagons West
Walk East on Beacon
Washington Story
Where's Charley?
Wild Horse Ambush
Winning Team, The
World in His Arms, The

MORALLY UNOBJECTIONABLE FOR ADULTS

Reviewed This Issue

Hour of 13, The
O. Henry's Full House
Untamed Women

Previously Reviewed

Actors and Sin
Beware, My Lovely
Big Sky, The
Breakdown
Captain Black Jack (British)
Caribbean
Clash By Night
Devil Makes Three, The
Dreamboat
Eight Iron Men

Fabulous Senorita, The
Fighter, The
Fourposter, The
Franchise Affair, The (British)
Gobs and Gals
Green Glove, The
Happy Time, The
Here Come the Marines
High Noon
Holiday for Sinners
Just Across the Street
Just for You
Kangaroo
Laughing Lady (British)
Les Miserables
Lost in Alaska
Lovely to Look At
Lydia Bailey
Maytime in Mayfair (British)
Merry Widow, The
Narrow Margin
Old Mother Riley (Irish)
Outcasts of Poker Flat
Park Row
Pat and Mike
Quiet Man, The
Raging Tide, The
Red Mountain
River, The
Scaramouche
Sellout, The
Son of Ali Baba
Spider and the Fly, The (British)
Stormbound
Stranger in Between, The
(British)
Sudden Fear
Three for Bedroom C
Tomorrow Is Too Late (Italian)
Under the Paris Sky (French)
Untamed Frontier
Voice of Love (Italian)
Waco
Wait Till the Sun Shines Nellie
Wall of Death
What Price Glory
Wings of Danger
Without Warning
Woman of the North Country

How to Spread Christmas Joy

Many readers of *The Liguorian* have written to us somewhat as follows:

I was introduced to *The Liguorian* when a subscription was given to me by a friend at Christmas. It has meant so much to me that I am now sending gifts for others, that the enlightenment and inspiration I have received from it may be spread among my friends.

The Liguorian is thus a Christmas present that makes friends more dear. They do not forget the one who gave it, and many of them are inspired by the gift to give it to others. If you read *The Liguorian* with pleasure yourself, spread the pleasure by giving it to one or more of your friends for the coming feast of Christmas. Please do not delay so that we may know in good time how many copies of the Christmas issue must be printed to take care of all the Christmas gifts sent in. You may send three one year subscriptions to friends for five dollars.

CHRISTMAS GIFT FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____

Begin subscription with December issue ; begin at once _____

Send Christmas card announcing gift in December, signed:

Name and Address of Donor: _____

Copy this form for sending in 3 gifts for \$5.00.